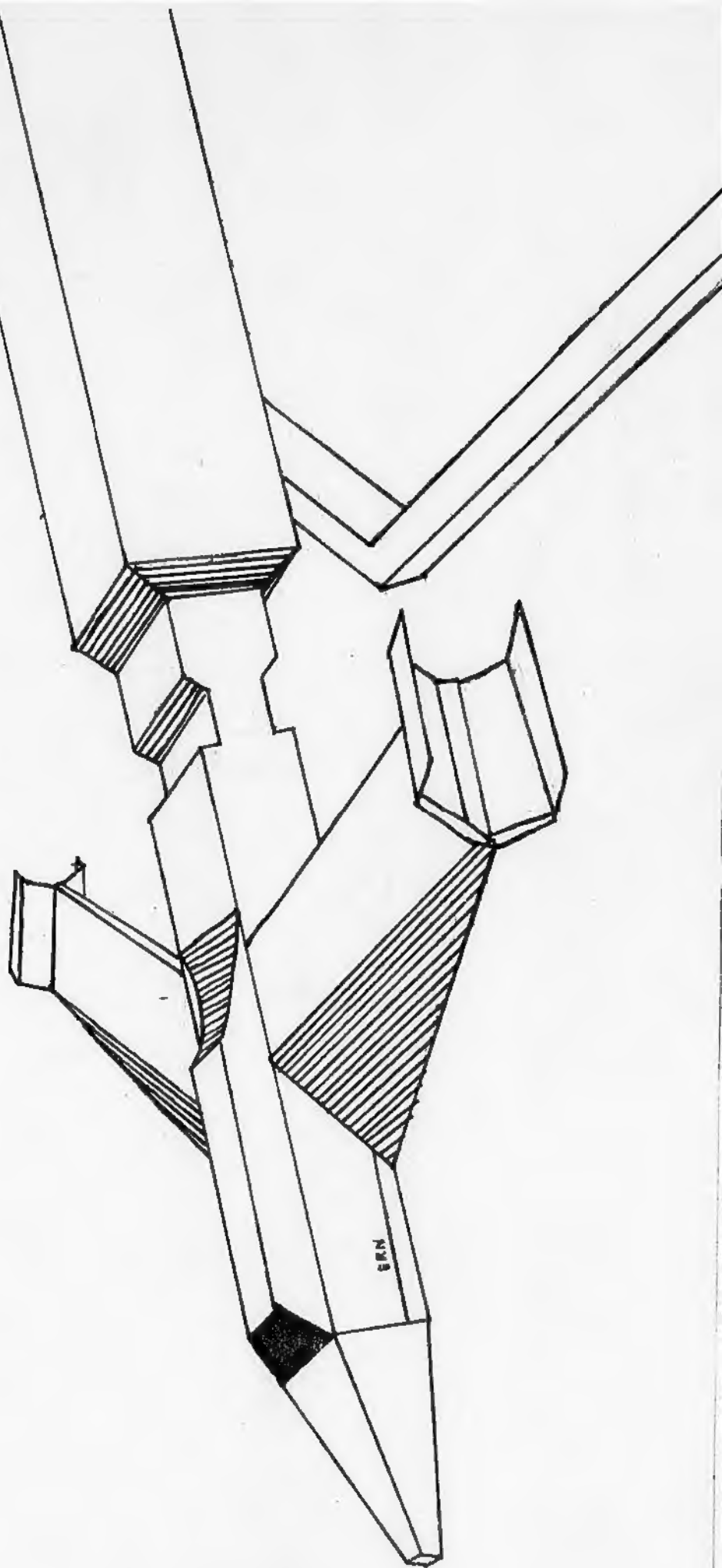


THE APART



October 1986

APA-TECH # 44

The 555 Times # 44

The Amateur Press Association by and for the
members of General Technics (more or less)

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NOTES FROM THE CHAIR

Well, I must say that Greg got far better response than I expected. Now we have to see if it keeps up. The basic response i've gotten about enforcing the minac rules seems to be "Do it!" - but to be fair we'll ease into that too. So - all of you dead weight out there (you know who you are) - as of the January issue those who do not meet minac rules will be dropped from the roster, and if it gets to that point, put on the wait list when they wish to rejoin. Also, if there are no objections from the rest of the roster, we will adopt Barry's suggestion that the editors of GT's publications be exempt from minac rules.

I've eliminated the listing of cons we'll be at for a couple of reasons - first, I didn't want to put down cons that would come before Greg's deadlines, and secondly (and most important) I really don't recall ever being handed a 'zine at a con. Also, to save space (and therefore copy costs) I've been considering printing the roster only once every X number of issues, or when there is a change - whichever comes first. What are your views on this? How often would you like to see it? Let me know what you think.

That's all for now - see you at Conclave!

GTB

BORBORYGMUS

an APA-TECH zine from Barry Gehm

This one will be mostly mailing comments, friends, since I have them written already and don't have much more time. It has been a tough month. Not uniformly bad, but wild oscillations between good and bad. If I didn't have good external reasons for my mood swings, I'd say I was due for a course of lithium therapy. Maybe next month I'll have time to be more specific about what's been going on. Hope to see many of you at ConClave or the Ann Arbor berserker. Till next time, happy trajectories to you...

MAILING COMMENTS for #42

COVER Doesn't spending nearly two-thirds of the total trip time on the
Greg return leg seem a trifle anticlimactic?

SOMNIA ET I know what you mean about names that are not too common but not
DESIDERATA too weird, either. We always seem to have at least two Daves in
Donna my lab, and MSUSFS used to have two Mikes who lived together
(both almost invariably referred to by their last names, to keep
it clear -- "You don't mind if we call you Bruce, do you?") and of course
Chicago fandom has a surfeit of Bills. I've always been rather pleased with
Barry on that point: it's not so common as to cause half the room to turn
around when I'm addressed, but not so strange as to cause half the room to turn
around when I'm addressed. This does not constitute a suggestion that you name
your firstborn male child "Barry." == Don't know if I'll be attending Windycon.
Don't think I'll be on any panels. Don't think I'll be asked.

VON ZWISCHEN This apa is really international! It's nice to hear from you.
ZEIT U. RAUM Your comments about kanji got me thinking about APA-TECH
Linda standard topic number 17c/2 "Education, systems of, national
comparisons." I gather from the news reports that the Japanese
are worried that their educational system emphasizes rote learning and massive
memorization too much and creativity and original thinking too little. It
makes me wonder whether that isn't built into the written language: if you
have to learn 3000 kanji just to be functionally literate, then simply learning
to read is going to require prodigious memorization, and that will set the tone
for the rest of the educational process. Children who aren't good at rote
learning will never be able to read well enough to inform their potential
creativity. I really wonder if the kanji will not decline in use in the next

few generations. I would bet that by 2050 they'll be used the way we use Roman numerals: infrequently and mostly to lend dignity or a sense of ceremony. Do Japanese computers use kanji? == Do you expect to live in Japan for the rest of your life, or do you and your husband expect to move to the US someday?

EUROPEAN If you think the Navy is bad, try ten years of graduate school.
PERIGRI- We don't get annual leave to raise hell all around the
NATIONS Mediterranean. Re yr ct Roxanne: "What's your sister's rate?" --
Eric sounds like a great way to start a fight. Re yr friend Tim's
contribution: generally when an apa-reader sees a page

punctuated only with "...." the "self-indulgent garbage" alarm goes off. In this case, however, I would say Tim holds promise -- If he can restrict his creativity to what he has to say and not spend it on developing new rules of punctuation, grammar and syntax.

DR. GONZO'S I am indeed "only" thirty (for another month or so) but, as one
ONES AND of my teachers was fond of saying, "wise beyond my years." (He
ZEROS had a speech impediment that made it come out "wet behind the
Valli ears" but I knew what he meant. == I'll presume that when you say
my writing reads just like I talk, that's a compliment. == It's
nice to know I'm wanted in Chicago (or anywhere); I'm doing the best I can.

BONNIE AT You describe your team as "somewhat short of women to play with."
THE BAT Bill? Guy? Greg? Ok, all together now: "TELL US ABOUT IT!" ==
Ms. Jones You may not appreciate Bill's criticizing your spelling, but you
have to remember he recently went for more than a whole year
without committing a single typographical, grammatical or factual error in the
pages of APA-TECH, so he's in an excellent position to criticize.

PENNSYLVANIA "This is fantasy." Very, very true. God save us from real
POSTMARK life. == Re yr movie flood: Be grateful you weren't seeing
Guy C. In Search of Noah's Ark.

I WAS SAD I I had heard of Micromegas but not of The Consolidator. That's
HAD NO SHOES mighty impressive research. == "If polar bears are not members
UNTIL I MET of the mink family, how did this rumor get started?" It's not
A MAN WHO HAD enough I should refute nonsense, you want me to otsogerize it
NO FOOTNOTE 2 as well? Palmer writes "...I was so certain they were that I
Bill called up the zoology department at UF [Univ. of Florida] and
triumphantly demanded confirmation.... For the life of me I can't
imagine where I got that impression, but I was absolutely confident of my
ground on that question. Heretofore." There's a useful lead. As far as the
raccoon connection is concerned, Renee says she saw it on the sign on the polar
bear pit at the Sydney zoo (Australia, being only 7000 miles from Alaska, is
rife with polar bear experts.), and even says she called them up to make sure.
It is my contention that she and/or somebody at the Sydney zoo, and possibly
some other people somewhere, have gotten the idea that something that applies
to all bears (evolutionary kinship with raccoons) applies especially to polar
bears. If you think you can do better you are welcome to try. (The German
word for raccoon literally means "wash-bear." Aren't you glad we're conducting
this conversation in English?) == Re Windycon: Ghod, I hate to hear fans going
down that "We don't need a reason, it's just our policy" road. Are these the
same fuggheads who ran Chicon, or just the same kind of fuggheads? == Re yr ct
Steve: "About Mr. van Impe: Anybody who hates astrology is okay with me." I
realize that is probably just a flip comment, but it's like saying of the
Ayatollah Khomeini, "Anybody who hates disco is fine by me." Van Impe and his
crew hate astrology not because it's silly and irrational but because they
think it's satanic. I'd lay long odds that he and his followers find astronomy
just as evil when it says the universe isn't just 10,000 years old.

I LIT AURIC Re yr ct Guy C.: The idea that the structure (including future) **PARABOLOIDS** of spacetime is fixed and that consciousness perceives it only in sequential slices offers the possibility of time-travel drugs, that would change the way your consciousness perceives time. Brian Aldiss used something vaguely like that in Cryptozoic, but he didn't work it out very well at all. "Do you remember the future, Dr. Memory?"

OPTIC RANTS If they taught you in high school that humans had no instincts, **REPORTS** either you were in high school a hell of a long time ago, or Rod your teachers hadn't learned anything new since they were in high school a hell of a long time ago. ≡ Recently I read A Maze of Death by Philip K. Dick, a writer who almost always manages to depict amazingly accurately everything that goes on inside his characters' heads and amazingly inaccurately everything that goes on outside his characters' heads. In this book, he has military helicopters armed with ".88 millimeter cannons" (sic for the decimal point). Shades of the XP .04-50!

MORSELGRINDERS When I was growing up in a very small town in southern **LTD.** Dave & Illinois, we used to sit on the roof over the porch to Susannah watch the fireworks. Your description reminded me a lot of the Fourth in my home town. Greg is right. ≡ The left half of page three was absent from my copy -- apparently the original got out of place in the copier. ≡ If you're interested in getting an article on computer security systems, you might try hitting on Valli's husband, Joa. He audits them for a living. ≡ Your "postmailing" arrived the same day as the apa. What do we call it if it arrives before?

.....
Well, I think that's enough of trying to find some interesting variation on every title. It's not as easy as it looks, folks, even with a marginal super-power. Back to my usual format for

Mailing comments on #43

Cover: It's as good an excuse as any.

555 (Odd Editor) Times: Non-contributors beware! The APA-TECH Ritual Public Humiliation Squad will be at ConClave and Windycon! We have a seltzer bottle and we know how to use it! Only a note from the editor can save you! (Punctuation courtesy DC Comics!)

Dave (Bunya-Bunya) Levine: Glad to hear your life has improved, despite much turmoil. ≡ Working with underlings: I have been very lucky with the present and previous undergraduates working in our lab in getting people who do not really require "managing", i.e., no discipline problems, no resentment of my exalted status (...), etc., leaving me free to be myself and make some good friends. As far as somebody having to do things that are "too boring or time-consuming for me to want to do," there is an element of that, but it's quite apparent to my assistants that I work even harder at my job than they do at theirs, and that they are not yet capable of doing what I'm doing, although they hope to be some day. Plus I still do a fair amount of scutwork around the lab anyway. ≡ Loved your title (once explained.)

Rolf (Vacation) Wilson:

You should think of something really heavy to put in your kitchen now. Like a menhir. ≡ A "Marching Morons" story that Bill should tell but I will: When Bill was teaching physics at MSU, he and the other TA's, having read the story, would make marching noises when discussing their students (esp. the premeds). "What are you doing this evening, Bill?" "Grading lab reports -- tramp, tramp, tramp."

Rod (Transporter) Smith:

Congratulations on acheiving 3rd dan. ≡ You seem to have been attracted to the same comics I was as a child. Good old Doctor Solar, Man of the Atom. That was a great comic. Wasn't it from Gold Key, or Dell, or one of those "off brands"?

Susannah (Crumbcrunchers) West & Dave (Inc.) Powell: It's too bad Nikki

Ballard dropped out of the apa, she is a quilting enthusiast. In point of fact, that's one reason why she dropped out of the apa: she got so engrossed in quilting she didn't have any time for fanac (or a job). Watch out, the stuff's addictive. ≡ I have heard recently about the possibility of extracting a high-quality vegetable protein from tobacco on a commercial basis. It may become possible to raise tobacco without promoting cancer, if "Virginia tofu" proves practical. ≡ I agree with you, Dave, about the idea of all the Marines in Aliens going down and leaving their transport unmanned in orbit -- have they been breeding them for stupidity? ≡ Your comments on Solar Power Satellites were interesting but I think if you want to see one in your lifetime you had better plan on living to a ripe old age. (I would be pleased to be proved wrong on this, though of course you're free to live to a ripe old age anyway.)

Greg (Gramps) Ruffa:

Good luck on the JAS paper. I should be sending at least one, maybe two, off to the Journal of Biological Chemistry real soon now. ≡ You're a fine one to talk about the apa becoming to professional -- your zines look like they're typeset! Ah, for the glory days of light green dittos... ≡ After hearing about how the company paid for your trip to Atlanta, I feel less uncomfortable about the prospect of mooching an airline ticket to ConQuistador. Not comfortable, just less uncomfortable. ≡ So Bill is still running that "free bottle of wine" scam, eh? In Phoenix he did it by getting hot coffee dumped on him by a waiter. I can see that the ant has certain advantages. ≡ "'Name three 19-th century British Prime Ministers.'" 1. Gladstone 2. Disraeli 3. uh...Smith? ≡ If I'm a darn punk kid, what does that make Donna Proni, Guy Wicker and Eric Nash? Huh? I said, "If I'm a darn punk kid, what does that make--" Oh, for heaven's sake...YOUR BATTERIES ARE DEAD! I SAID, YOUR BATTERIES ARE DEAD! I AM SPEAKING UP! YOUR HEARING AID'S GONE DEAD! Oh what's the use? YES, YES, I KNOW! YOU WANT THEM TO GIVE BACK YOUR ELEVEN DAYS! JUST LIE DOWN! Nurse! Nurse! It's time for his sedative! Nurse?....

Sheila (

) Groves

I yearn for you tragically. Please write something soon.



After Changes, I am More or Less the Same

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Well, as you are reading this, I must have finally made it back into APA-Tech. All I can say is, it's about time.

Since I have last appeared here, a great many things have happened. Some of them humorous, few of them tragic, and most not worth mentioning. I intend only to cover the most recent and momentous, along with necessary background. Anyone with specific questions on my past, or a general inquiry (some of you, for example, will undoubtedly be unaware that I ever was in APA-Tech before) is cheerfully invited to ask.

While everyone was out of town at worldcon recently, I got bored and decided to get a job.

I also completely overhauled my bicycle, which (at least in retrospect) seems the more difficult of the two tasks.

Most of my previous work experience has been connected with financial software, which is not a situation I have been happy with. My last job involved an attempt to prey on small businessmen in need of custom software and advice. My last (and first) customer mostly succeeded in preying on me. He had a bad habit of bouncing checks. So I decided to start seriously looking for a job. (There are those who would say I was pushed.)

Normally, when I start looking for a job I skim the want ads in the Chicago Tribune and call up a few head hunters recommended by friends.

This time, the head hunter called me.

A local firm involved with Macintosh software was looking for a programmer. After a quick interview (the head of the company was about to leave for Europe), I was hired.

The company is called ICOM Simulations. If you follow the Macintosh market, you may have heard of them. They have two best selling games (Deja Vu, and The Uninvited) and a highly recommended debugging tool (TMON). These are their first products marketed under their own name, as previously the firm had developed video games and applications software under contract for other firms. They did a number of games for Atari in the old days under the AtariSoft label.

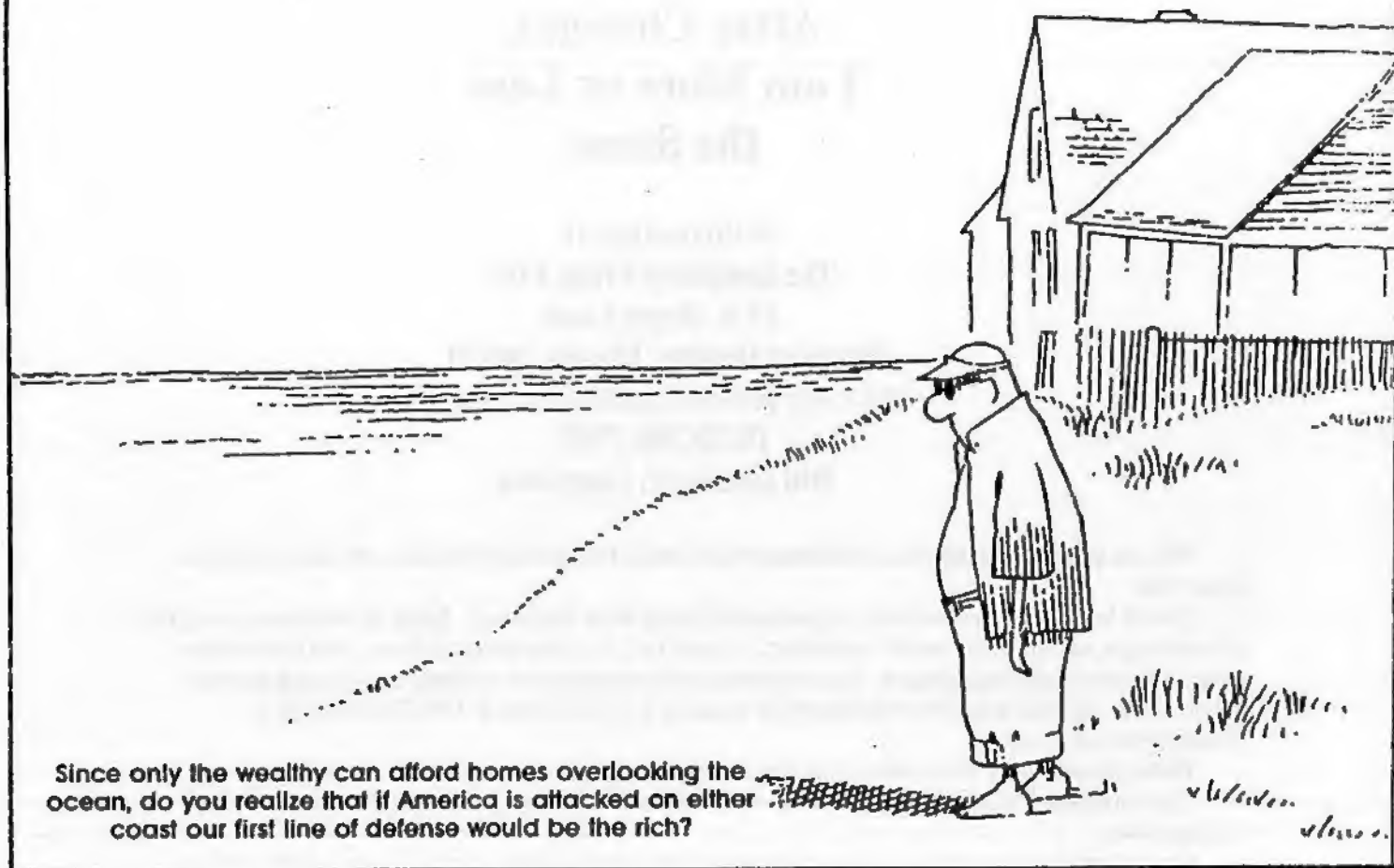
I will primarily be working on the next games, and some utilities, which brings us to the language. While it is well suited for the task for which it was developed, FilterCode as it is called is definitely not normal. It is a strange reverse polish notation, pseudo object oriented, forth-like glop. Extremely strange, but (as I said) well suited for developing adventure games. But it requires a great deal of effort and duplication of effort to use.

(As an aside: everytime I get a job, I seem to get involved with another strange language. Does this happen to everyone that programs for a living, or is it just me?)

So there are a few potential problems. It is a small firm, and as such, there is a certain amount of pressure on the employees. The firm has survived a major business setback in the great video game crash, but how stable is it now? Stay tuned and find out, as I do, in the months to come.

(Incidentally, for you Amiga people out there, we are about to release an Amiga version of Deja Vu. The disk I/O is definitely slower. So there.)

(Some of you will have seen this before, but I certainly haven't seen any comments about it in print, so here it is.)



A Modest Businesslike Proposal

Currently there is a great deal of interest in the idea of being able to ride out a nuclear attack. I don't mean the type of preparation that calls for a big supply of non-perishable food and a limited amount of self-defense. I refer, rather, to the people who prepare for moving out and setting up in a relatively undevastated area no matter who wants to stop them and who carry more fire power than was used in putting down the revolution of your choice. These are the people that go overboard. Some of these people have money, and whether they know it or not, they have a problem.

How do you know when the attack is coming?

Think about it. Don't just give the obvious answer. Give it time to sink in.

We, the people, don't have radar and satellites. All we currently have is the Emergency Broadcasting System. This is only a test. Oh, and the sirens that most people will probably think means a tornado is coming. At least *they'll* be heading in the right direction.

The last time anyone tried to use the emergency broadcasting system, it was due to an error. Curiously enough, very few radio stations paid any attention. Also, it seems less than obvious where on the list of things to do in case of a nuclear attack activating the system is. Is it before launching the retaliation? Or after putting out the cat? With the Reagan administration's emphasis on moving government functions into the private sector, perhaps it's time someone tried to provide this service as a money-making operation. Bill Higgins has suggested a name for this enterprise, Nine Minutes, Inc.

(At this point, I should state that I have approached this purely as an exercise in analysis. I don't seriously think there is enough of a market for this, and even if there were, I'm not sure I'd approve of taking advantage of such paranoia.)

There are two issues to be dealt with, at least in broad terms. The first is detecting that we are under attack. The second is getting the word out.

The solution to the first problem lies in the area of intelligence and surveillance. As we wish to receive confirmation of attack ahead of impact and independently of the government, we must depend on people in a position to watch for the events we'd expect to occur in case of an attack, and a variety of

radio receivers. Among the events to look for would be things like an increase in Extremely Low Frequency radio traffic to American submarines, a wing of bombers leaving North Dakota, the fueling of Titan II ICBMs in Missouri, the president's airborne command post taking off in Indiana, the president suddenly getting into a helicopter on the White House lawn, the sudden departure of any missile submarines in port, or the grounding of all commercial air traffic. The use of inside sources may be ruled out, as it seems likely that such activities would be illegal, and this enterprise is likely to have enough trouble with the government as it is. Also, if my years of film-watching are correct, in case of an alert all outside phone lines on military bases stop working. Including the pay telephone in *Dr. Strangelove*. Sorry, Stanley.

As none of this intelligence is any good without being told to someone, our first problem (after convincing the Air Force that all these people loitering around outside their missile silos and airfields are really harmless and in fact beneficial to the American free enterprise system) is to get all this information back to a central headquarters. From Washington, this is easy enough. Helicopters are somewhat conspicuous, and the President's movements are usually recounted in nauseating detail in timetables and briefings for the press, making any deviation glaringly obvious. All that would probably be necessary would be to publish a legitimate newsletter, get a press pass, find an office overlooking the mall, a strong pair of binoculars, and a good bail bondsman for when the Secret Service complains. If field work proves necessary, there are always groups of protesters in front of the White House, and our nation's capital must surely be wired for cellular telephone by now.

Unfortunately, offices that overlook North Dakota are tougher to find, though possibly easier to rent. An all together more rural approach is called for here, though it is easier to see an ICBM or bomber taking off than the President of the United States (just try it, if you don't believe me). And while it will likely be awhile before cellular telephones become available in some of the more obscure locations in which the government choose to put bombers and missiles, CB radios should prove generally effective and nicely unobtrusive there, and will surely be adequate to report to the nearest local office with a telephone.

We still have the problem of co-ordinating these field reports. The central office should be located in an area which has historically reliable telephone service, and a high density of trunk lines open at all times. An old television series maintained that this was the case with Omaha, Nebraska. Fine. All this information will be reported by telephone to Omaha, where it will be compared and confirmed. Several watchers per ICBM field would seem prudent, and in all likelihood the president will board that helicopter about the same time as his E-4 takes off in Indiana.

A better technique for notifying the head office might be to use Geo-Star.

Geo-Star is a service being set up by Gerard K. O'Neil (of L-5 fame), and is sort of a poor man's version of Navstar (The location finding system, not International Harvester).

Navstar requires that you carry around a fairly sophisticated computer and radio receiver system (roughly the size of a backpack at any reasonable price), which is used to receive time signals from an orbiting network of 18 extremely accurate clocks. By comparing the time received at the same instant from these clocks, you can figure out where you are.

With Geo-Star, you carry a small transceiver. (A GE test about seven years ago showed that with a dish modified from an umbrella and a five watt transmitter you can send reliable morse code to a geosynchronous satellite (The ATS-6, which had an unusually large antenna and is unfortunately defunct, was used).

Anyway, you use this transceiver to send a series of coded pulses to some satellites. They relay these pulses to the home office, which compares the time of receipt (measured on one accurate clock, on the ground where everything is cheaper and easier to repair) and figures out where you are. They also compare it to a stored map of the country and figure out in human terms where you are, how high you are (and if you want, your rate of climb/descent since last request, and if any messages you have waiting) and then they package up all that information and send it back to you.

Now if they can do that, they can also fix it so that you can have more than one receiver per subscriber, and leave one receiver in your home office. Then when your field agent wishes to report anything, he simply pushes his button and takes off. The signal tells you he saw something, the location tells you that he was indeed at the right place (and his rate of departure tells you how scared he is, which certainly seems like a good measurement of severity).

For notifying the customer, the best of all possible systems would be a nation-wide paging system, probably based on a geo-synchronous satellite. It appears that such a service is inevitably going to be offered, sometime in the next decade. For the time being, something could be worked out involving somewhat smaller paging systems. There is a firm offering paging services on a uniform basis in any major city

So we have (or will have, as unfortunately Geo-Star's first satellite link aboard the G-Star 2

satellite, died shortly after orbital insertion) the technology to do this, using radio and satellite communications.

Which means, unfortunately, that both of the critical information links in our system would be vulnerable to EMP or ASAT attack, but that in itself would be a warning. And if we can't give a warning that far in advance of attack, the entire idea is ludicrous.

(Note: To remind you, in case you forgot, the entire idea is ludicrous and is only being suggested as an unlikely way for an extremely cynical person to make a buck off hysteria. I know you probably don't need reminding, but Orson Welles once forgot to make a statement like this, and look where he ended up. Selling cheap wine. No way!)

So, we've figured out that the war has started and provided a valuable service to our customers. We've given them at least a slight edge over anyone who hasn't subscribed, except for their neighbors who found out they did and have been watching them through binoculars ever since.

We are left with one slight problem, though. You can argue all night whether or not Chicago or Pittsburgh are targets in case of nuclear attack. But those people who gave us this information are *Guaranteed* to be sitting next to the red dot in the middle of the target! It seems only fair to use some of the profits to construct strategically located bomb shelters for them.

Speaking of profits, there is the question of getting all this paid for. The concept of selling several levels of service seems reasonable, each successive levels giving more of an edge, but also a higher risk of false alarm. Recent reading seems to indicate that the U.S. military has 3 to 4 false alarms a year that send the crews out to the strategic bombers. If our service isn't set off by these, it probably isn't worth having. Also, as any technique we use to notify the customer undoubtedly has a limited capability to send messages at any given instant, there is probably also a sliding scale. You pay more to be one of the first hundred notified than you do the second. We would rent the beepers from the firm concerned, and re-rent them to our clients. If you don't pay your fees one month, your pager no longer is on the list to be notified. No credit! It hardly seems appropriate to have anything but cash up front for this sort of enterprise....

Two points have been raised since I started discussing this:

The first is how we can be sure that our agents are all in place. I have attempted to address this by use of the Geostar system, and some sort of hourly check in procedure could be instituted.

The second and related problem is why are they all in place. As I pointed out, they are all guaranteed to be standing next to ground zero, and in the case of those near a major military target, even a bomb shelter is not going to enable them to survive. So where is their incentive?

Either they're simply in it for the good pay (not believing in the necessity of the service), or you have to offer them some very good perks.

Suggestions include using mostly retirees and offering free notification for their relatives, or offering a 2 month on and 10 month off schedule, with all employees on the notification list.

A minor point is what is to keep the russians from signing up. This would only be useful to them in the case of an american first strike, of course. But they do seem to believe in this possibility, and there is evidence that they are not just being paranoid.

Finally, there is the point of how much warning this service could give. This unfortunately descends into a discussion of US-USSR targeting strategies and war plans and is beyond the scope of any discussion without a secret classification.

Freeze! SDI!

One of the more interesting things about the SDI is it looks different from all angles.

1. It looks good from the stand point of getting more money for research (sort of).
2. To the aerospace industry, it looks like an opportunity to make a lot more money without pushing for unacceptably high nuclear overkill levels.
3. If not matched by an equally effective system on the other side, it could theoretically allow a future chief executive to dictate terms to the other side. "We want you out of western Europe." This is, I will admit, hopelessly optimistic about the effectiveness of any system, and pessimistic as to russian engineering, as well as terribly naive as far as diplomacy and foreign power is concerned. But it seems like there are those in the Pentagon that see it this way.

So, it can be seen that almost everyone can find a reason for supporting SDI, if they feel like looking hard enough. But this isn't the only way the SDI looks different. It looks different to different people, too.

The President, who was first sold on the deal, insists loudly and frequently that it is intended as an effective shield for the entire country and presumably our allies as well. To the Pentagon, and Strategic Defense Initiative Office, and the rest of the military establishment, it looks like a way to

defend our offensive forces and thus extend the practicality of the Mutual Assured Destruction strategy into the twenty-first century. There are low-keyed conflicts between these two views. A week after *Time* magazine ran a special issue dealing with SDI that included the fact that the chief scientist of the SDIO viewed the whole thing as a way to defend our military assets, Casper Weinberger had to get up in front of the press and state that he thought it could defend the entire U.S.

Strangely enough, I don't really think now is the time to determine what you're trying to defend. There are basically three phases to a complete defense system:

Boost phase. This is where you try to knock the soviet ICBMs out of the sky before they get out of the atmosphere.

Coast phase. This is where you use weapons (probably space based) to knock the missiles off course.

Terminal phase. This is where you try to destroy the warheads as they re-enter the atmosphere. In fact, in a very real way this amounts to the ABM system we spent years arguing about back in the 1960s. And which in fact the Army has never stopped working on. (No, I don't mean the Sergeant York. For some reason, ongoing work on missile interception falls to the Army. They've conducted several successful tests from an island in the Pacific Ocean.)

My point is, it makes sense to fund research in all of these if you're going to try anything, and the question of where a warhead will actually impact gets fuzzier the further back the trajectory you go. A good boost phase defense therefore has to defend the entire U.S., while a good terminal phase defense is a 'point' defense, good only for a limited area.

At this point, it would probably be a good idea to back away from the hopes and dreams, and talk about what SDI really is.

It is really only a ten year, blue sky research program. A lot of interesting pieces of equipment will get built, and some of them will fail to produce any results except graduate theses.

An example of work under way is an anti-tank weapon based on the electromagnetic rail gun. The funding for the prototype of a mobile anti-tank weapon has been given to the University of Texas, where they are glowing speaking of its effectiveness against armor of all kinds. In the fine print is the fact that it will weigh at least 8 tons, and probably require a second armored vehicle to hold the electric generator to run the thing.

As Bill Higgins once said, there are a lot of scientists out there that would like this kind of funding for equally chancy projects of their own.

But suppose out of this ten years of research we find a set of technologies that work. After five years or so of engineering, we start to put together the system. (Incidentally, this puts deployment well into the early twenty-first century. Remember when Reagan offered the Russians a deal where we would delay deployment for a few years? Measured from what starting time, I wonder.)

What does this do to the world military situation?

First, it doesn't slow spending. After SDI is deployed, we've got to start figuring out how to use our military forces to back up our allies and policies. The decreased risk of a nuclear exchange probably will tend to make military planners a little bolder in the use of troops. You no longer have to worry quite as much about pushing the other guy over the edge, so you're more likely to shove back.

Without the risk of the other guy over-reacting, small wars again become possible. Some of the deterrent value of nuclear weapons is lost, and you have to be ready for naval and land engagements again.

The Strategic Defense Initiative. Making the world safe for conventional warfare again.

That's about it, except for two side notes.

When we were scrambling around looking for funding on the MX missile, the senators from Utah and Nevada were heavily involved. They were on the military committees and were definitely hawkish. America needed this new, survivable, more accurate missile. But when the only acceptable basing modes involved turning their states into sponges for russian warheads, they suddenly found themselves in the untenable position of opposing the construction of the only option that was ever recommended by any group that examined the the question, and yet still remaining strong on defense. They found strong environmental arguments for not going ahead, but in the end it remained that they wanted the MX...anywhere else. So we will face a major problem finding places to put any new major defense projects. Public activism is much stronger now than it was when the last set of major military facilities were built.

Also, while I was preparing this, the GPO put out its estimate of how much the contemplated SDI system would cost. Now, this is an extremely tentative estimate of the cost of equipment that hasn't even been designed for the most part, so it's probably low.

The figure was something like four or five hundred billion, as I recall.

The interesting contrast is that Hans Bethe and Leo Szilard suggested a bomb back in the 1940's that could potentially wipe out all life on earth, due to very long lived fall out. One device. Their cost estimate was forty billion. Tie this in with the plotline of *Dr. Strangelove* and you begin to wonder whether the whole idea is cost effective....

But in spite of all this confused musing, I don't think I'm against SDI. It's tough to be against anything that get this administration to fund research. And it is an interesting question. I've always said I wished that the Department of Defense would actually spend more time on defense than offense. So I guess maybe it's put up or shut up time.

The Gap

The U.S. is faced with a crisis of serious proportions. If the SDI is installed in a workable form, we will largely be safe from foreign attack, leaving us all to live out our lives in relative safety.

With fewer worries, the number of anxiety related illnesses will go down. This means that life and health become more valuable.

And there's the problem.

The Russians will be out-living us.

Think about it. Whenever you look up the record for the world's oldest man, you find it's somebody in the caucacus mountains, where health care is about as primitive as it was in pre-civil war days. Think how old they would be with good, modern health care!

How do they do it? Yogurt. That's what they say, yogurt.

Obviously, the U.S. needs to drastically increase domestic production of yogurt. But that will not be enough. Measures need to be taken to ensure increased consumption. A crash program must be started to force feed all adults with yogurt as a stop-gap measure until an entirely yogurt fed generation can take up the challenge. Medicare must pay for yogurt for our elderly, yogurt stamps for the poor, even tax credits for the production and consumption of yogurt would help. In the end, even these measure may not be enough. Exploration and inventory of America's hidden reserves of Yogurt shale must be started, and artificial yogurt production research stepped up. And then we must deal with the biggest problem of all.

The whole concept of yogurt just plain turns me off.

And now, in closing, some news:

WASHINGTON (AP) — A bus-size bundle of experiments parked in space in 1984 for a 10-month stay has been 70 percent ruined by being left in orbit too long, a top NASA official said Monday.

The long duration exposure facility — called LDEF for short — was launched from the space shuttle Challenger on a mission in April 1984.

It contained 57 experiments to be smacked by meteors, pelted by cosmic rays and corroded by oxygen atoms.

More than 200 scientists in the United States and abroad were involved in the experiments, which included the survivability of 13 million seeds and swatches of different coating materials to see how they fared in exposure to the harsh space environment.

The 11-ton aluminum cylinder, 30 feet long and 15 feet in diameter, was to be retrieved by another shuttle crew in February 1985. The retrieval mission was put off for one reason or another, however, and the LDEF was still in orbit when the explosion of Challenger put a halt to the space program on Jan. 28.

It last had been scheduled to be hauled into a shuttle cargo bay in September this year.

Raymond S. Colladay, who heads the space agency's office of aeronautics and space technology, told a congressional subcommittee that 15 percent of the experiments have been enhanced by the overlong stay and that another 15 percent were not affected one way or another.

The other 70 percent, he said, "has been degraded significantly or totally destroyed."

Colladay said that the LDEF orbit is steadily declining and that it will sink to an altitude of 116 miles in 1991, become unstable, and tumble back to Earth.

Now, the LDEF is a framework covered with panels and largely hollow, so all of it should burn up on re-entry, unlike Skylab. And of course, 1991 is a long ways off. If we aren't flying shuttles again long before that, I will be surprised and the manned space program will be dead.

Well, that's enough tirades for this time. See you next month when we examine the sociology of mall dwellers.

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which is in no way responsible for its content.

What I did during my summer...
(A vacation it wasn't)

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September 24, 1986

This is the first time I've written to the APA. Upon reading some previous issues, I've noticed a lot of people talking about their children (or lack thereof.) Well, who am I to stay off of the band-wagon? My wife, Connie, and I are the proud (doting?) parents of a beautiful 18 month old girl. Her name is Rachel Marie, she has dark brown eyes and brown curly hair. Her favorite past-time is harassing our cat... poor kitty ...

We took her to Confusion '86 before she could walk. While I was standing in the registration line with her, an elderly gentleman began doing the "coochie-coochie-coo" bit with her. It took me a while to see his name-badge, but when I saw Hal Clement on it my jaw nearly hit the carpet. All thru the con he would stop to say hi to her. On Sunday, Connie asked him if he would like to hold her. You could tell he loved children. I found out that he didn't have any grandchildren (at that time) and wanted some badly. Hal, you'd make a wonderful grandfather.

Connie and I moved into our current residence in the beginning of June. We are renting a 3 bedroom house on the northern edge of Detroit. We are renting from the same church/school that Connie attended when she was a child. They are paying for all the materials to fix the house up. Guess who gets to fix the house up... It's a good deal, but a lot of work. I'm beginning to imagine how much work a house you owned will be.

One day while we were surveying the necessary work to be done upstairs, I noticed a flap of paint peeling off the wall. I pulled at it and got a 3 inch piece of paint off, and created several more flaps... We found out that without much effort at all you could peel a large enough piece off to get your hand behind it. Or your whole arm if you tried. Ok, Fine! the previous painters didn't use a primer coat on the plaster board. So, if we paint over it it won't do any good. What is the solution? Why, peel all the paint off of the walls and ceiling. After many hours of doing just that, and getting nowhere fast, we came up with a plan. What if we get a whole bunch of people over here to help. We did just that... We had a "Paint Peeling Party." Probably one of the only ones ever held. We had an award for the person(s) who got the largest unbroken piece, and the person(s) who got the most weight-wise off of the wall. It was a lot of fun (I think.) One of the most memorable comments from that evening was "This is paint! Paint shouldn't do this!" This came from someone wearing a robe of paint after it fell off of the ceiling onto him. Special thanks to Guy Wicker and all the others who helped out.

Enough of the domestic side of life, on to the yuppie side of life. I am a 'Systems Engineer' for EDS working at the GM Tech Center in Warren Mich. Basically I support mainframe graphics (CADAM) and PC's. I will probably be getting more into stand-alone UNIX graphics workstations in the very near future. I have become a real hacker on the PC, and am getting into the many bulletin board systems around the Detroit area. Speaking of BBS', if any of you are on one I can get to, tell me the number.

In my spare time, ha, I work on Traveller (for those of you who don't know what it is, it's a futuristic science fiction roll-playing game.) It's fun to be running it down here because most of my players are friends from Mich. Tech. I am also getting back into Karate with my old instructor from Tech.

Connie and I went to Ad Astra (first time in Toronto for me) in June. It was fun, but the con committee has a bit to learn. I guess they were expecting 300 and got 600. Security was non-existent on Sat. nite. Mundanes were wandering in and out of the function area, and walking off with arm-loads of pop out of the con suite. The hilite of the con for us was sitting at Tulio and Donna's Huxter table. It may not sound like much, but we had a lot of fun. Besides, it gives Tulio and Donna a little time to go and wander the con. We'll do it again (if they want us) right hon? ... Hon?

Roxanne: sorry we couldn't make it to the Hamfest/Berserker, We look forward to seeing you at Conclave? Windycon? Confusion?

Dueter: Do you live? Are you married? Do you have ~~kids offspring~~ children? Are you still dropping lasers into the ocean? Can we come and see you? 'Ya know, Connie has never seen the ocean?

Alice: Have you convinced Mike into having children, yet?

Todd: Genesis was in concert here. 10 miles away. I couldn't make it SOB!

Donna & Tulio: 'Ya want to work out an exchange program? You can have Rachel for a month if I can have the lathe... No? Well, want her for a month anyway? You can pick her up at Windycon.

Valli: Hi! Long time no see. Hope to see you at Ishercon.

FROM THE WEST: Take I-94 to the Cadieux exit. Turn left on Cadieux and follow it left onto Morang. Continue on Morang to the first light. Turn right onto Roxbury. Our house is the first on on the right (next to the school.)

FROM THE EAST: Take I-94 to Cadieux, follow directions above. (turn right.)

FROM THE NORTH: Take I-75 south to I-696 east. Follow I-696 to I-94 west (to Detroit.) Follow directions above.

If coming from I-96: Take I-96 to I-94 east. Follow directions above.

Bob/Con I

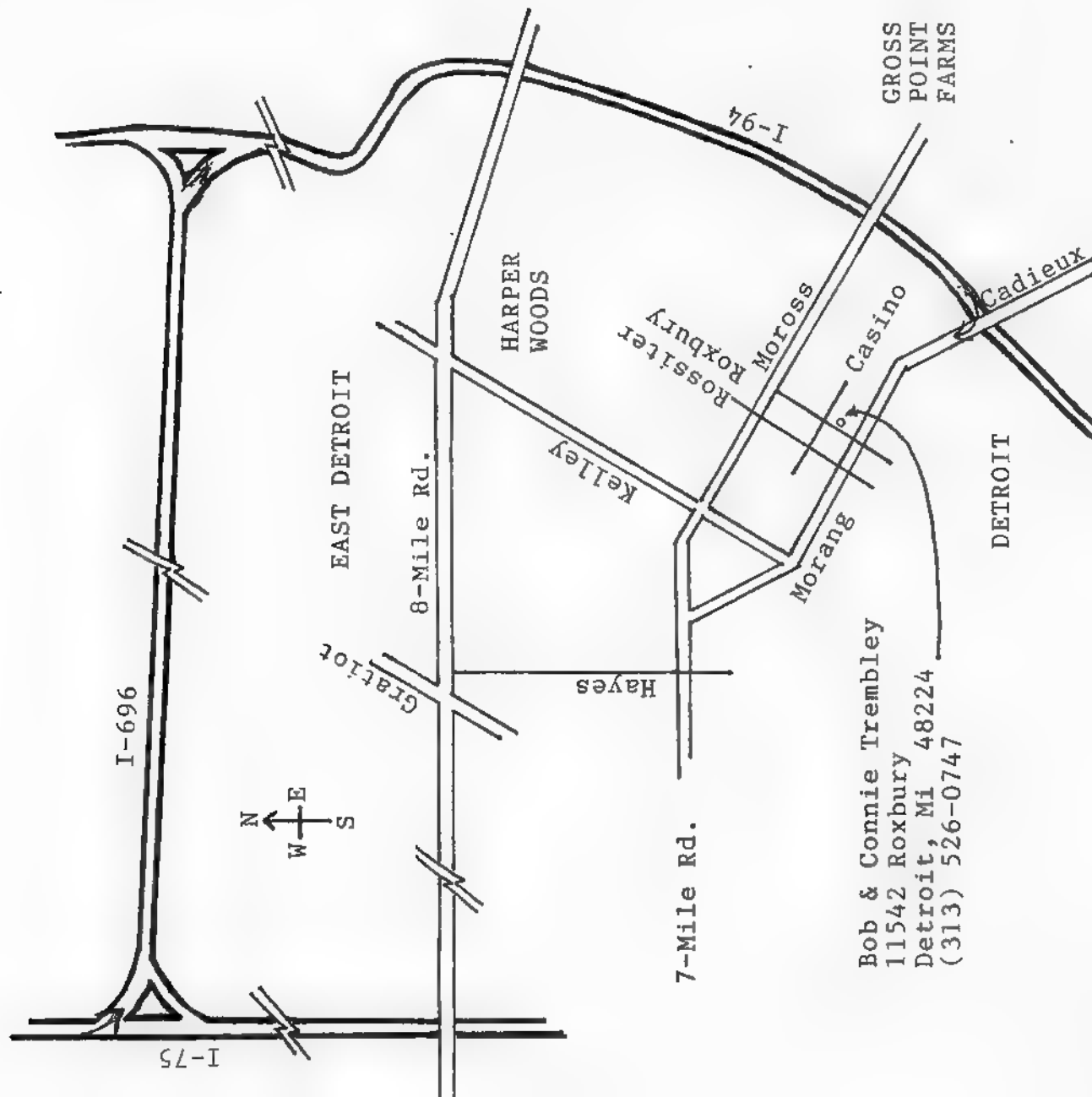
We would like to invite you to a
Housewarming **BERSERKER!**

Oct. ~~25, 26, & 27th.~~

24, 25, + 26

Everyone is invited to come and have a
Good time!

If you think you might be able to
attend, please let us know!



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11542 Roxbury
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\$100,000 DOESN'T GO AS FAR AS IT USED TO

Rolf Wilson
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Champaign, Il. 61820
(217)ELYSIUM

David Levine - so far it seems to be Macintoshes somewhat ahead of Amigas (Amigae?) in Apa-Tech. So far, our average member seems to use some kind of 68000 machine and speak Japanese. What does this predict about the future, if anything?

I'm glad to see that someone out there writes good manuals. I've been in the computer field long enough that I can manage to understand some of the worst manuals ever seen - as long as the information is in there somewhere. Usually, all I really want are a couple of examples that actually DO something. I write a small column on C programming for the local Mac users group, and it will win no awards for deathless prose. But I put in working pieces of code to illustrate code, and I know they work because I worked on them until they did. (This has also led to the situation that I have never gotten my submission in for that newsletter even a day early.)

In reference to what you did at Tek getting out to the public - about a year after I left Burroughs to work for the U of I, I saw a small note in ComputerWorld or some such that the product I had worked on had been released. I never again heard of it. In the spring of 1985, Mary and I were visiting her grandmother in Coral Springs, Florida - which happens to be where Burroughs relocated to. I debated with myself for several days about whether I should stop in and say hello. Finally, through inaction, I did not. I wasn't even sure that there would be anyone there that I knew.

Rod - You must be one of those disciplined writers, to write a chapter a week of a novel. Of course, the fact that you have managed to contribute to Apa-Tech 38 times in 43 issues would tend to back that up. I tend to write things in great bursts, when a sudden mood strikes me. (Actually, I tend to do a lot of things that way.) About 3 years ago, when some people in ChUSFA were putting out a fantasy magazine (actually did 2 issues) I was talking to one of the people doing it and learned that they were actually paying MONEY for stories. Not much, maybe \$10 for a short story. That proved to be a spark - in the next 45 minutes, I wrote a short story. Three different people read it, and they all had the same comment "Not bad. Where's the rest of it?" I thought I had written a story, but they said that it was just the initial scene-setting. Later, Bill Leininger said the same thing. Four people liked it, but in 3 years I have not written any more of it. Maybe the urge will strike again.

Champions is one of those games that I have avoided very carefully, for the very reason that it looked interesting. I spent many hours playing D&D many years ago, and I have seen people do the same with Champions. I already have about a dozen things that could occupy all of my time. I don't need another.

Gee, it looks to me like the desktop mainframe is coming fast. I hear that the 68030 is going to be about an 8 MIPS machine. (Rumour *1657). You mentioned proofreading - don't you have a spelling checker? Sure, it won't like "worldcon", and other such, but it will clean up all those occurrences of "teh" and other junk.

Barry - I agree, prune the deadwood. I'm willing to take my lumps if I don't write anything.

Susannah & Dave - the Wedding March was about the only thing I insisted that NOT be in our wedding music. I left much of the rest of it up to the organist, and we liked her suggestions.

Speaking of Prime Computer, my new job at the Geological Survey may involve some work with one. But I have helped fuel the "Prime vs. VAX" debate which has been raging.

Greg - I like the cover. It captures some of that strange inside vertigo of the Marquis. First time I can remember getting vertigo looking up. The first thought I had when I looked at that immense open space was "Gee, that must be expensive to heat..."

By the way, as long as you are browbeating Higgins, please remind him that he has been falling behind on the Known Space concordance. And you might get after that guy on the West Coast...

As for "monkeys typing Hamlet", have you seen the Lafferty story, "Been a Long Time Now"? Best treatment of the idea that I have seen, and wins the award for the story that spans the LONGEST period of time. I'm not sure what story takes the shortest period of time, leaving out those which take place outside of time entirely.

Well, there was Worldcon. I'm beginning to feel like Bill Higgins ("I'm missing everything!") at these things. Too much going on. Add to that the time we spent running the trivia contest. Speaking of which, I don't intend to work on any more trivia contests for another 5 years or so. I have to read more books and watch more movies. We've been asking too many questions about the same old things. Not to say we haven't had fun. Maybe sometime in my copious spare time I will get all our old trivia questions on the computer and publish them for whoever would like to read them. Right now they reside on hastily scrawled 3" by 5" cards stored in a couple of shoeboxes. The cobbler's children go shoeless, etc.

I don't do a lot of autograph hunting, but I do like to get autographs on good hardcover copies of some works I particularly like. I had a copy of "Something Wicked This Way Comes" to try and get Bradbury to sign. There were 3 sessions with him, should be no problem. What I found was that Bradbury seldom makes it to this side of the Mississippi, and hundreds if not thousands of other people had the same idea. I never did get that autograph, and to top it off, my book got stolen when a friend of mine put it down for a moment.

I must thank Greg for telling us about the Fabulous Fox Theater in Atlanta. Monday night a whole bunch of us trooped down to see Lawrence of Arabia in the most amazing movie palace I have ever seen.

California: I never seem to see much of it. I was there for Worldcon in 1984 and spent much of the time inside hotels. I was there in 1985, for all of about 18 hours. Now I'm going there for 2 weeks, and STILL probably won't see much of it. My new job is sending me there, to take classes. The inside of a classroom in California probably doesn't look much different than it does here. But I do get a weekend in between, and plan to go visit Greg. The class is in Redlands, about 50 miles east of LA. I probably will end up spending most of my evenings in my hotel room reading, but will make an attempt to stop by a Thursday night meeting of Los Angeles SF club, and see their famous air-conditioned clubhouse. I don't know if Dean Sherwood is still around there. I tried calling him at the number listed in Apa-Tech (JEDI-KNT) and it had been changed. So far, I have not gotten anyone at the new number. John Nine has asked me to see if A Change Of Hobbit has any evening hours, and will send a want-list with me. Mary had intended to come with me, having some free time after leaving her old job. So we bought tickets. Then Mary found a part-time job she liked. So I went to cancel her ticket. "25% penalty" they told me. Yes, I knew. Sigh. Then they called me back and said "%50 penalty". When I got annoyed, they decided that it would be easier to tear up the forms (which they had not sent in yet) and forget the whole thing than to make up the difference, which they probably would have been obliged to do.

Last year in Austin, while traipsing about some bookstores with Bill Higgins and Greg Ruffa and others, I encountered some books of cartoons from the local newspaper with the strange name of "Eyebeam". They were strange, very strange. I like that. But I needed my money for some other things, and I didn't buy them. Last week, they showed up here at the Illini Union. This time, I bought them. I still like them - you might too.

I've been working at my new job at the Geological Survey for over a month now, and I haven't really done any programming yet. What I've been doing is designing system configurations for new computer equipment. Some money appeared by means of a strange loophole in the state government budget, and if we want it, we have to spend it before the election. How much? I still don't know. One day it was \$100,000. The next, \$200,000. A couple days after that, \$300,000. Then back down again. Every day, a new budget, a new set of requirements, and a tighter deadline. People having all-day meetings. The survey has a couple of Prime computers, originally purchased because they were the only ones that would run a certain piece of software they wanted. Now, other people want other pieces of software, some of which will not run on a Prime. One group of people want a VAX of some kind. I guess I'm one of those people. I worked with a VAX for 4 or 5 years and still like them. The other group wants to go with exactly what they have now. I don't think anyone will be totally satisfied with any solution that can get through the opposing people who actually make the decisions. I still don't know what's going on. I don't know where I'll be working in a year.

Ruth Ann is throwing a big Halloween party this year - at our house. Seems a little strange, doesn't it? Well, we have a big house, and Ruth Ann is good at throwing parties. It seems to be a skill that not everyone has. I don't have it. About the only time I ever tried to give a party (as opposed to inviting a few friends over for dinner, like we do at "Thanksgiving") was back in high school. It wasn't much of a success. I did get one person to come... So, it's just fine with me to have someone else organizing things. Gives us an excuse to clean the place up, too.

CRUMBCRUNCHERS, INC.

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Ripley, OH 45167

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September 28, 1986

Down to the wire again, as usual! I started out writing this contribution by hand, as the small Crumbcrucher is awake and active, but that was even more difficult than using the computer. (Usually she's climbing all over me when I'm using it, but I see that she's gotten her alphabet book off the bookshelf, and is examining the pictures in it.)

Her most recent crumbcrunchiness has been to play with and totally rearrange a whole series of index cards on which we'd worked out a tentative schedule for the next several issues of STARWIND. Of course, we hadn't recorded the order of these cards anywhere, so a whole evening's work was to be done again. (Guess we learned our lesson!) When we tried to reconstruct what we'd done, the inspiration just didn't seem to be there, and we weren't nearly as happy with the selection of the stories. But after some thought and work, I've come up with some that seem almost as good as our memories of what we originally chose.

While I'm on this subject, I'll give you a brief run-down of the type of non-fiction that we're looking for (but mostly don't have yet) for these issues (along with the tentative date of publication):

Spring 1987: geriatric research and/or life extension

Summer 1987: SDI or SDI-related research; current research in veterinary medicine

Fall 1987: chemistry of paint

Winter 1987: Robotics; computer security systems; how "anytime bank" machines work; methods of communicating besides speech

Spring 1988: Robotics; educational systems in US and abroad; overview of Norse myth

Summer 1988: artificial intelligence; article on Olympics

Autumn 1988: martial arts

Winter 1988: lumbering (that is, felling trees!)

As you can see, this is very vague, and what we're looking for is pretty open. But perhaps it'll give you an idea!

I don't know if Dave will have a chance to make a contribution this month, as he's seriously studying for his professional engineer's exam. This seems quite as formidable as studying for the GRE. He's working his way through a workbook on the exam, and has been wandering around the house trying to find answers and explanations in various reference books. (We discovered last night that we don't have any algebra textbooks around at all!)

We've been attending auctions lately, looking for some of those nice-to-have, though not essential, things, like a washer and dryer. So far, we've acquired an end table, a rocking chair (a big hit with Marlene), a bureau, a bookshelf, some wooden cubbyholes and a couple dozen

shirts. (These last came from an auction of a men's clothing store!) My main function is to keep Dave from getting too excited or giving into Marlene's desires - he almost bought a HUGE stuffed Snoopy for her last week!

MAILING COMMENTS

Cover: We're eagerly awaiting further news of the Atrium Blimps. After reading the articles in the August PYRO, Dave insisted on stopping at a Toys r Us to look at remote-controlled toy cars!

Dave Levine: It's neat to see how people are experimenting with the capabilities of the Macintosh. We produce our IBM-PC small business SIG newsletter on the Mac (don't know what the subscribers think of it - we never receive feedback from ANY of them, positive or negative), using MacWrite, PageCutter, ReadySetGo and the Imagewriter II. It looks REALLY slick. When we get access to a LaserWriter, it will be even slicker, though by that time, I expect the newsletter will be defunct - we haven't been able to attend a meeting since February and the members just aren't discussing issues of interest to us. (They've been talking about DAC-Easy Accounting for the last six months!) All this is good practice for us, however, for when we can seriously get down to the magazine business.

Rod Smith: We almost were adopted by a cat recently - a terribly skinny ginger kitten, about eight weeks old, stumbled onto our porch recently. He settled down on the steps and refused to budge. We resisted the urge to feed him, but he stayed anyway. Emotions ran high, as our neighbor (we live in a house that's been made into two apartments) declared vehemently that he hates cats. Fortunately (or unfortunately, depending on how you look at it), the kitten eventually decided to go back across the street to the restaurant where we'd originally seen him.

Barry Gehm: Discovered more interesting facts about Multimate - I volunteered to input the text for the local Women's Club's program book and in spell-checking the document came to the conclusion that the dictionary definitely has interesting contents! You may have noticed last time that I spelled gypsies with a capital G - the spelling checker insisted that this was the way it was spelled. It also told us that you spell realtor with a capital R. There are a good many people names in the dictionary, too. However, though it will recognize Margaret, it blinks on Mary! I was surprised that it didn't tag Bedouin, but the fact that it didn't proves that it's a proper dictionary, I guess! (In this instance, Bedouin was a woman's first name, though of course the spelling checker didn't know that!)

Inspiration seems to be lacking, so I am going to say farewell! Perhaps we'll have more excitement to relate next month. By that time, Dave will have recovered from having his wisdom teeth out, and will have taken his exam, and the wedding I'm madly preparing music for will be over, so maybe we'll have a chance to relax (haha).

Susannah

being another untimely submission for apaTech from

Alice Bentley
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Aurora IL, 60505
(312) 898-2622

Shameful though it is to admit it, if it was not pouring rain outside I would be missing yet another Apatech. I had planned to spend all day today digging dirt and planting bulbs in the yard; as it is I *should* be mortaring rocks, painting rooms, or unpacking boxes. The joys of home ownership.

Mike is cranking along on his book, it should be finished by Oct 15, or maybe the end of the month. It's interesting having him home all the time, I could certainly get used to it. So far the only drawback is that I can't use the Mac much - he's writing the book on it.

We are going to Conclave, Windycon, and Chambanacon. We are also going to have a housewarming party Saturday December 13. As the weeks and months go by we kept extending when we were going to have this party, but the house seems to never be finished anyway. December is safely away from when Mike has to have the book done, and November has Windycon, Chambanacon, and Thanksgiving.

Mailing Comments will unfortunately be limited to AT 43 (last months') because earlier issues are buried forbiddingly deep in the chaos here.

Cover - Indeed, the atrium at Atlanta was entirely unsuited to blimps, it is just as well that we didn't try. In addition to the hanging fabric sculptures there were turbulent breezes that would have frustrated even the best of radio controllers. // Sheila Groves, Mike and I looked over from the fortieth floor to the dizzying depth of the lobby below. Sheila and I agreed it would be "Seconds of Fun", Mike moved closer to the wall.

David D. - Your tales of Tek woes sounded very much like my last jobs problems; the small (100 people) successful optics company

was bought by a giant semiconductor supplier which then went/is going belly up. Ask Sheila for more recent details, she's still there. // Re "see you on the Funway" A Rocky Rococo restaurant just opened near here - they serve pizza by the slice - as expected no one there has heard of Firesign Theater.

Rolf - I doubt you'll get much sympathy for an enforced vacation, but you have my sympathies for being laid off. It's happened to me twice, and I still seem to have more trouble changing jobs than I do moving across the country. // In reference to your new concrete stair footing, I heard about a person who had bought an old warehouse and was refinishing it into apartments. The floor of the building intrigued the crew hired to strip and sand it - they discovered it to be made of 8 foot long railroad ties, END UP. Back around 1920 the building had been built to test explosives.

Rod - Re your broken toe, nerve damage is tricky stuff to predict, but the thing that suprized me was how things could change even after much time had passed. Three years ago I had some pretty major oral surgery done and part of my upper gums went dead. Two months ago I noticed that the numbness is not as far forward as before, so healing can go on for a tremendously long time.

Barry - I agree with both you and Jamie that publishing both your review (of Emergence) and his reply would get to be a lot of copy, so I'm glad some of us got to see it at Isher last year. I very much enjoyed READING Emergence, but admit it has many problems. Threshold (his second book), however, wasn't even any fun to read. I usually enjoy juveniles, but I would not recommend this to anyone older than twelve.

Susannah and Dave - Quilting is one of those many textile hobbies that I would love to learn about, and probably will in years to come. I have already mastered (as far as I wished to) knitting, crochete, knotwork, and weaving. // Really think about how much work you like to do before you buy a house, because even a Home Beautiful requires a fair deal of labor. Mowing the lawn, repainting the windows, replacing pipes, repairing drains, adding more electrical, installing lights, and a leaky basement are what you get with a perfectly maintained house; all that other stuff

is extra. Above to the contrary I very much enjoy being a home-owner, and I'm sure you will too. // Baby's first words can range quite a bit. In our family of six, no one said "Mommy" or "Daddy" first; my first was "by-by" (a parting remark) and my brother Jonny's was "kitty". I've heard that "MINE" is very common. // Dave, I disagree about not being able to learn Japanese from a book. When I was working on it a reasonable amount of time I felt I was doing fairly well. I would not have been able to understand spoken Japanese very well, but I was starting to get the hang of the writing. Nowadays, that's all water through the sieve, but I do plan to get back to it.

Greg - Since spaceship covers seem to be outnumbering all other types, what sort of covers would people like to see? // We once had a wonderful, crazy conversation about various superpowered beings, and which would be more powerful. It seemed to be a real standoff between Captain Caption and Deus Ex Machina Man.

Worldcon was for us, as for other GTers, a sort of Relaxaworldcon (there's an oxymoron for you). Programming ran as many as ten tracks sometimes, but there were few things I was interested in seeing. I thought the Marriott was visually awe inspiring, well run, and totally unsuited to a worldcon. It was so large that even Worldcon couldn't book all the rooms, insuring an admixture of mundanes; there were no really large suites for the bid parties; and the open air consuite, while interesting, was not very conducive to conversation. It was rumored that New Orleans had a terrific party Friday and Saturday night, I have to count it as rumor, though, because no one I spoke to was able to make it into the room. When I visited on Monday I understood, the room was only large enough for forty or fifty people to fit.

Chicago in '91 will be announcing it's worldcon bid at Windycon. I've heard that Minneapolis is also going for '91, and that Toronto was going to, but switched to '94 when they heard about the competition. The people who ran the Bermuda in '88 bid will be running some sort of SF cruise, probably in the summer of '89, write them for details (actually there aren't any yet).

Until next time....

Alicia

Mostly Mailing Comments

A zine for Apa-Tech # 44, written by Donna Proni, at 530 W. Walnut, Kalamzoo, MI, 49007. (616) 342-4967

Since I'm writing this at the last minute (10:30 PM September 30), I'll start with the important stuff (ego-food) in case I don't have time to do too much more.

APA-TECH 42

From Between Time & Space - Linda - WOW!!! - I was sure you had forgotten how to write. I'm glad you decided to send us something. I hope you keep it up - I think you'll enjoy a line to fandom, especially if it enables you to renew old friendships as well as begin new ones.//Do you think you might ever persuade Yasushi to say (write) a few words here? say "hello" to him for me.//Take care and always be happy my sister - my friend.

Wandering in Europe - Eric - Yes, Sue's changing - I had a feeling that being in Europe more or less on her own would do that - I was afraid that we'd grow apart, and things were a bit strained just after she got back, but we're fine now. She said you had changed too (but then I knew that - the Eric I knew would not have experienced what you wrote). So when do you get leave to come home?

Melancholy Baby - Tim - If you just enjoy reading the apa, and are content to read Eric's, you can do as we did for the past issue - Eric will "frank" your zine (when a member of the apa puts in something by someone else not in the apa, it's called franking). If you want your own copy each month, you'll have to send me money (\$ 3.00 dues the first year, \$ 2.00 after that plus postage - about \$ 1.00 each issue).

Dr. Gonzo's Bits Against - Valli - re yr ct Guy - my current word processor is Apple Writer II (I'm hoping to get a better one soon).//re Guy's car/boat - we used it to drive to Atlanta, and Marty told us to just stop when we got to Miami - that way the trunk would be in Atlanta.//re yr ct me - you mean you would want your children to come to Kazoo for the summer to "play" on the machines? Of course, it's an interesting way to get around child labor laws.//

Late Nights All Alone... - Barry - How did you determine how I should have voted for the Best Novel Hugo? Should the award be voted based on correct science only? Or should opinion count too? Suppose I thought that Cuckoo's Egg was an incredibly insightful look into an alien culture - should I put my opinion aside because you put it before "no award", and that presumably means the science was not accurate? What do the Hugos mean anyway?//(How's that for a comment hook? - and for the record - we put "no award" before Cuckoo's Egg too.)

Take Me Out to the Ball Game - Bonnie - As far as I know, of course there's nothing wrong with wanting to gain knowledge for fun rather than just profit. But Sherlock Holmes disagrees - he said that the brain is like an attic, with a limited amount of storage space. He therefore only remembers facts which are important to his work, and promptly forgets such things as the fact that the Earth revolves around the Sun. But then, he's just fiction anyway.

Letter From Easton - Guy - The thought that "This is fantasy" is kind of frightening and awesome - but is it really true? What exactly does "virtually everyone else" mean?

There is No Footnote 2 - Bill - re yr ct Barry - isn't there a book out about dubious "facts" floating around - called something like "There Are Alligators in Our Sewers"?//I didn't want to pick on Bonnie either, so I didn't.//I don't know the origin of the yellow diamonds, but I've been told that their purpose is, in case of an accident, to alert police that there was a child in the car who should be looked for either in the wreckage or surrounding area. If this is true, I think people should get a ticket for hanging up the sign when there isn't a child in the car.

I Lift My Lamp... - Greg - re yr ct Rod - if there won't be dark sky anywhere on Earth by then, we'll just have to go somewhere else.//re yr ct Marty - OK, so what is the cure?

Transporter Topics - Rod - Well, re English being our "official" language, with your comment the score is now 1 to 1 to I still don't know.

APA-TECH #43

Under the Bunya-Bunya Tree - Dave - Bob & Connie already have a "GT" child, as well as Dave & Susannah.//Did you get dropped from Apa-Tech previously due to lack of activity or lack of funds?

What I Did on My Vacation... - Rolf - We should have such problems.//Johnny can drink when he turns 21 - he can vote when he's 18.

Transporter Topics - Rod - Tullio is anxiously awaiting the next New Madrid earthquake.//You know, it'd be nice if you started using some kind of seperater in your mailing comments - you jump from subject to subject, and sometimes it's a little confusing to read.

Surely You're Joking, Mr. Ruffa - Barry - Hopefully Greg will be getting this out more quickly in the future - I too have serious doubts which increased when day after day went by and I still didn't get my copy for half the month. but this is an experiment, so that's one of the things we'll have to test.

Crumbcrunchers, Inc. - Susannah/Dave - What about "mine!"?//Is the magazine rate the same as first class in terms of time it takes to receive? Do you have to mail a certain number to get magazine rate, or do you just ask for it?//If you three show up at Ishercon this year, there will be at least (probably also at most) one other child - Rachel Trembley.

Give Peach a Chance - Greg - re prozine - I debated about dittoing this and the 555 Times for this issue, but decided to "xerox" anyway - maybe if I have an issue with everyone else having already duped, then I'll go back to the old days of cheap ditto.//Tullio has all of you youngsters beat.

* * * * *

Well, I think I'll be giving my two weeks notice at work tomorrow. I need to do some work at home, both for Isher Artifacts and on the house (it takes longer to get ready for Ishercon than you might think - particularly when we're in Florida the preceeding three weeks). Also, I hope to do some work for Alex, and if I'm working at home it makes me more flexible to his needs. I've already done two jobs for him - an 18 page form for hospitals to use in determining the education, skills, expectations, etc. of employees and potential employees, and a questionnaire for MSU (have you been asked to fill anything out Barry?). Mostly it's just typing, but I also had to do a small flowchart, and that was fun.

No news yet on the baby front, but keep your fingers crossed for us. Gotta go - - -

A Title! A Title! My Computer for a Title!

A contribution to ApaTech #A3 44, composed by Roxanne Meida Shields, 4309 Drowfield Dr., Trotwood, Ohio 45426 (513) 837-4165 Copyright 1986 by the author.

Well, APA fans, it's been a while. I've missed two whole issues--the summer is practically gone. (Well, by the time you read this it will be almost ancient history. Yeesh.) There's a lot to catch up on. When we left off, Hamfest was news. That was four months ago. Wow. I guess it seems that long.

I'm still working at Shawmut Mortgage. The work is kind of boring, but the people I work with are pretty nice. Upper management is a bit strange, considering they're men who still think it's 1955 (i.e. women should get coffee and wear skirts every day, and god forbid they should rise above department manager).

The company has been planning to move since before I hired on. They found a new building in June, which is 20 miles and 45 minutes from home. We were supposed to move in September, but now it's around Thanksgiving. We'll see how long I last then.

I haven't been writing much over the summer, shame on me. This is quite remarkable considering the positive feedback I've been getting. I'm struggling with the idea of writing coherent stories rather than stream-of-consciousness apa stuff. The stream-of-consciousness generally holds together, but there just isn't any plot or character development there. I do have a couple of stories in the works, and after they're finished and have collected some rejection letters, I'll put them here. If you don't see them, ask me about them. It will spur me to keep working.

What I Did On My Summer Vacation

We took a rather nice vacation in August. The company surprised my when I asked about vacation. They said I got six days of it this year, but had to wait until 90 days after my hire date to take it, and I had to work through December then or else pay it back. Great!

We left on August 23 and went to Scott's brother Don's in Pittsburgh. He is a professional projectionist, which is a good job for him because he loves movies. He usually picks up a couple at the video store for after he gets home. It's gotten to the point that they charge him a fifty cents a piece, and sold him a 25" Sony TV just about at cost. He has interesting political views, which he has trouble integrating with his own family's experience, but that's okay. His wife, Penny, is a grad student in computer science (AI) at Carnegie-Mellon. She also plays violin and sings in a group that plays Appalachian mountain music. It sounds a lot like the Celtic stuff you hear at cons, or Steeleye Span, with American influences. Don's pretty nice in small doses, and Penny is fascinating to talk to. We didn't do a thing while we were there except eat, sleep and watch movies on the TV.

It was great, and a good preparation for the rest of the time.

On Monday we loaded the cooler all the camping gear into the car and headed off for Atlanta. Of course, we didn't take the most direct route. First we stopped about a hundred miles southeast of Pittsburgh to see Mr. Kaufman's weekend house. [Mr. Kaufman owned the big department store in Pittsburgh, the equivalent of Hudson's in Detroit or Rikes in Dayton. Kaufman's is still going pretty strong, I guess.] His family had some land left over from when they first settled Pennsylvania, and in the twenties he decided to build a house there. The house is called Fallingwater.

He pulled out all the stops. He hired Frank Lloyd Wright, and let him go nuts. The house is built with a steel structure with lots of stonework and concrete. It must have looked incredible in 1930--whatever when it was finished--like a Jetson's house before they ever dreamed of the Jetsons. It is cantilevered over a waterfall.

Myself, I couldn't live there. The ceilings are about six feet. Everything is horizontal, and there are lots of layers. There are a lot of neat touches (like a stairway that descends from the living room to a point about two feet above the water, just right to sit and dangle your feet). It was pretty dry when we were there.

So how come we can go traipsing around this place? Because when he died, Mr. Kaufman's estate decided to donate the land and house to the Western Pennsylvania Conservation District. Essentially the house is a museum unto itself. The Conservation District does work to preserve wildlife and other good ecological stuff, and raises money by charging people to look at the house. We happened to arrive the one day of the week (Monday) when the house itself is closed, but due to the arrangement of stairs and walks, we didn't miss seeing any but the top level. And got in for less than half price and didn't have to put up with crowds or a tour guide.

It was mind-boggling and I recommend even Wright-jaded Oak Parkers to stop by if they're ever in the neighborhood (and go out of their way to get in the neighborhood).

We proceeded from there to get on Route 40 just north of the Maryland border and took it east to Hancock, MD, from which we turned south into West Virginia. I never thought of Maryland as being mountainous, but that part of it is. And to think that's the same road Scott takes to work every day! (About 300 miles farther east, but so what.)

Most of our trip was spent on the Blue Ridge, overlooking the Shenandoah Valley. It was difficult for me, from Michigan, to imagine such big mountains, and so many ranges of them, so close (less than sixty miles) from the ocean.

We stopped for food and directions in Front Royal, at the northern end of the Skyline Drive. Skyline Drive is the name of the road that runs along the Blue Ridge in Shenandoah National Park. The Blue Ridge Parkway runs from where Skyline Drive ends (near Roanoke) to the Smokey Mountains in Tennessee. The Chamber of Commerce there had state maps for every state. I had never seen anything like it. They even had Alaska and Hawaii. The lady there was willing to let us have whatever we wanted, but we only got Virginia and Georgia.

We camped overnight in a National Forest Campground that happened to be the site of the very first Civilian Conservation Corps camp. It was called Camp Roosevelt, and can be found on many maps, including our Rand McNally atlas and the 3-D map of Shenandoah National Park we got. It was quite primitive, but had flush toilets (figure that out). We were the only ones there that night. It stayed warm and I didn't mind camping a bit, now that I have my air mattress.

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Tuesday was Wildlife Day. We didn't plan it, it just turned out that way.

In the morning, Scott was cleaning up after breakfast and I went to take down the tent. Step #1 is to take down the poles. Unfortunately, a Walking Stick was standing on the rear guy line. Not knowing what to do, I got my camera and took a picture. Then Scott got a stick and got it to walk over onto the stick, and I got another (better) picture. We put the stick down in the grass and finished taking down the tent. It was amazing how little time it took to set up and break camp--less than an hour each, including blowing up the air mattress.

We went down into a cave that day. It was fun, I have always enjoyed caves. This was a typical tourist trap cave, and in fact was never a "historical" cave like the ones in Missouri and Kentucky. A retired geologist speculated that caverns must exist there due to the rock content and succeeded in excavating this one. It was pretty dry when we were there, but there was a lot of sand on the route and the tour guide said that was to absorb water and provide traction in the spring. Their big thing was a certain kind of calcite formation which is only found there, and no one can say for sure why it formed, and especially not why it only formed there. They have all their specimens covered with chicken wire to block "collectors." They have plans to install plexiglass.

While there, I posed with their sample of the local wildlife of prehistoric times (i.e. a dinosaur in the play area).

After that we started down the Skyline Drive. There are "scenic turnout"s about every thousand feet or so the whole length. We stopped at most of them, and took pictures sometimes. Three hawks were circling at our second stop. I called, "Hey, hawk, come here and let me take your picture" --and he did! I wish I'd had a telephoto lens (as it is, he's slightly larger than the planes in our air show pictures), but it's the thought that counts.

When we stopped for lunch a groundhog was checking out the picnic area, but wouldn't wait for me to get the camera. We had sandwiches.

After lunch, we were motoring along at the speed limit (35 mph) when out of the woods, down the steep embankment to our left, came a bear! He ran across the road and disappeared down the other side. Scott had to stand on the brakes to miss him. Wow! Scared us silly!

It was a black bear, and had probably been a cub in the spring. It certainly wasn't full grown. He/she was moving pretty fast crossing the road.

We stopped at the next turnoff to catch our breath, and a motorcyclist that had been behind us (he'd been near us most of the day) came up and asked if that had really been a bear, and how we felt. We wanted to get his name so we'd have another witness. It was exciting.

Wednesday was more of the same. It turned a little hazy first, then clouded up as we crossed into North Carolina. We managed to set up camp, get a shower, eat and get things almost cleaned up before the downpour came. We sat in the tent and listened to weather reports of thunderstorms in the mountains.

By morning, I had had enough. I wanted to pull out all stops for Atlanta. To my surprise, Scott agreed almost at once. As long as we went to Six Flags over Georgia (amusement park) on Friday. Fine. We headed for the Interstate and the quickest route to Atlanta.

An hour into the trip, I found out that he had done this primarily to shut me up. (All in all, not a bad idea, in retrospect.) But at the time I took this as great personal insult, so we turned west on I-40 so that if the weather cleared up by the time we got to Asheville we could still camp out in the Smokey Mountains. I wasn't too thrilled at the prospect (all our gear was wet), but it was better than being coddled.

As it turned out, the weather didn't clear one bit. Not for days.

We got some very strange looks from the bellpeople at the Marriott as we unloaded and put on our cart a large cooler, two wet sleeping bags, a tent, two suitcases, assorted buckets, ground cloths, etc. After we explained we had been camping all week and had to dry it out, they let us in, but still didn't seem too happy about it.

I don't know how we did it, but we shook the bellperson at the elevator and went unescorted to our room, thus getting out of tipping him. And the concierge seemed quite irate as I emerged with the (emptied) cart, on my way to return it. I immediately surrendered it (five floors above where I had gotten it) and went on about my business.

Donna, Tullio, and Guy were amazingly accepting of having a tent in the bathtub. Almost as much fun as unloading the car was walking through downtown Atlanta with five plastic bags of laundry as we looked for the laundromat. I'm sure we looked like in-the-flesh bag people.

The most interesting person we met down there was at the laundromat. It turned out he was a construction worker down from Brooklyn for a big project, but that wasn't my thought when he walked in, started a washer, dumped his duffel bag in and began undressing into it. He bought some soap from me (I was willing to let him have it free, but he insisted) and proceeded to sing as he washed. It turns out he was one of Phil's neighbors in Brooklyn, living on 53rd St. Great. Saturday night I saw him wandering the parties at the con, still with the duffel over his shoulder, blending in just like everyone else, and better than the Tennessee band.

I never got his name, and if anyone finds out what it is, I don't want to know.

Friday we went to Six Flags, although I tried to talk Scott out of it. I'm glad I didn't, because it was one of the most enjoyable parts of the stay in Atlanta.

School had started in Atlanta the Monday before, so the only kids in the park were under five or from out of town. Added to that it was the unusually cool weather (which would plague the whole con), and there were NO lines. On a couple of rides we actually had to wait while they flagged down additional riders. We rode the FreeFall (Demon Drop in Ohio) twice within five minutes. Reportedly people sometimes stand in line up to two hours for it. We also rode the big roller coaster twice, and everything else once. I got completely drenched from the waist down on one river ride. (On sign on the way in, the one with the normal restrictions about heart conditions and expecting mothers, Item #4 said, "You will get *very* wet." They didn't lie.) Scott found this quite amusing (I shielded him from it, so he was only slightly damp). Fortunately this was the last ride before we left.

We went to dinner at Pittypat's Porch with Bonnie Jones and Sam Paris. It was great, made better by a waiter with a German-Southern accent who walked as though his shoes were too tight. He kept forcing food on us. I had jambalaya (a little bit of everything, plus crayfish) and a strawberry daiquiri. It was the most frozen daiquiri I had ever had, to the point that my first mouthfull was 100% rum. I let it thaw about fifteen minutes before trying another. The only alternative was to eat it with a spoon. But they let you keep the glass (they better when the drink costs \$6).

Other people can tell you about the Hugos and the trivia contest. My only real opinion on the Hugos is that Lester Del Rey should have accepted the Hugo for Judy-Lynn, although I can understand why he didn't. I think the best way to resolve the problem is to nominate Lester himself next year, and then vote for him, because the Del Reys certainly deserve the Hugo for best pro editor(s). About a third of my books say "DelRey" on the spine; what about yours?

The only real programming I got to was Orson Scott Card's Secular Humanist Revival Meeting--quite a challenge for a dyed in the wool Mormon--but I had also seen it at Inconjunction. If you ever get a chance, go to it. Basically he's only saying, "Keep religion in church and out of our schools, and the only way to do that is to be active on the PTA and school boards," but the way it's done is just incredible. (After it was over, John Frambach came up and asked me who it was that was speaking, and his eyes about popped out of his head when I told him. I'm not sure why that sticks in my mind, or why John seemed surprised. I guess Hugo winners aren't supposed to do things like that. Why, I'm not sure. We have every other kind of activist in Fandom, and too many feminists and gay rights-ers.)

Anyway, Saturday and Sunday are pretty much a blur, and Monday really is because we had to high-tail it back up I-75 for work on Tuesday.

Favorite New TV Shows This Year:

- 1) ALF
- 2) The Wizard
- 3) Our House

TANK McNAMARA



6

Mailing comments on Issue #42:

555 Times: I like the monthly format. I may only get contributions into every other one, but I will try for every issue. Getting an ApaTech every month is almost guaranteed to keep me active and interested in Techie/Fannish activity.//Are there really this many readers out there?

Dreams and Desires: We are beginning to seriously plan for children. We haven't gone so far as to get fertility drugs (no multiple births for us, please) but we have abandoned birth control. Maybe we'll have kids next summer, maybe not. We're letting God decide for the time being.

Names? You want names? Boy, do I have names! I have been naming things for as long as I can remember. Kind of unusual, but not too strange, hmmm....

I generally want to name my kids something they can alter to their own taste. James and Elizabeth are the best names for this. While each has a most popular nickname (Jim and Beth), there are many other good derivations.

Kelvin is a good name with a scientific twist. If he was uncomfortable later, he could use either Kelly or Kevin. Roxanne wasn't very good because Roxie and Rocky were the only true nicknames, and I'll never forget the experience in fourth grade when a fellow student stepped to the blackboard and spelled it Rock Sand.

I've always liked Peter, but it (and Richard) are out of the question with Shields for a last name (think about it). I had planned since I was about fourteen to name my first boy Andrew, and use his father's name as a middle name. As luck would have it, I married Scott Shields. Since I refuse to inflict the initials ASS on anyone, let alone my own child, we'll need a different naming scheme.

I'm wondering how you would handle a nursery at Isher, since we needed one at Hamfest on Saturday, and I expect we'll need one next year too. Do you put all the kids and all the parents in one room? Or just the kids? What about kids who can't stand to be away from mommy (or aren't there any)? How do you handle all the feeding schedules? We will probably solve the problem of Isher (once we have kids) by leaving them with Grandma for a couple of days, at least until they become "real people."

Being around Scott's sister's kids at Christmas last year was an education. She has three girls, probably too close together (Beccy was 4, Alyssa 2, Colleen 6 months). It seemed she was always feeding, changing or otherwise catering to one or another. It was pretty bad sometimes when (say) Alyssa needed her bottle while Colleen needed to be changed and Beccy just wanted attention. There being so many adults around helped a lot.

I worry about having 3+ strange (to each other) kids among umpteen strange adults, some of whom are kid-phobic. Will kids cause GT to split into the Have and Have Nots?

Be careful with the Lysol. DO NOT light the spray as it is coming from the can! (No, I didn't, but a kid in my high school did. His dad had good health insurance; good thing, too.)

From Between Time and Space: Good hearing from you.//Japanese is supposed to be quite challenging for European descendants to pick up--Good luck! Maybe some of your students could turn the tables and help you learn

their language.//Why would they fill donuts with bean paste?
Yuck!//Did you draw the little symbol at the bottom, or is it a stamp?
What does it mean (if anything)?

Wandering in Europe: Sounds like you had a good time.//I think she's an E-4 or 5, and is trained as a fireman. Which doesn't mean she puts out fires; I think she'd be called a plumber anywhere else. She fixes pipes and installs water heaters and stuff like that. The guys under her (she must be some sort of officer; petty officer?) don't like her too much because she expects them to work. Apparently this isn't too common in their part of the Navy. But her superiors like her. She has managed to get promoted ahead of schedule, despite being court martialed (a long, long story) her second year. This is her fifth year; at the rate she's going she'll do the whole 20. She doesn't like the work, but does like the pay and benefits.//I hope the picture isn't a self-portrait.

Tim Haddock: It makes a lot of sense to put pacifists in the armed forces. That means they won't fight until there is absolutely no other choice.//I suspect the armed forces are no worse than any other company that has a work force of people who generally can't get a good paying job anywhere else. If nothing else, the discipline you learn there helps a lot. //What were you studying before you joined the Navy?

Dr. Gonzo's Bits Again: This is produced using WordStar, with clever patches by Scott. It can do several fancy fonts (more if I used "FancyFont" the program) but I generally stick to regular Elite with the occasional italic phrase or ~~striked~~. The computer is a now-discontinued Morrow MD-3 with two disk drives.

We bought a VCR in August(YAY!) "Real Genius" was one of two free movies we got at the rental place with our coupon. Considering that he chose it by the picture on the box, it was pretty good. (This was before issue 42 showed up. Doo-doo-doo-doo.) The girl reminded both Scott and myself of Cecile Cloutier; I know a few people who could qualify for Lazlo. The others are pretty much generic teeny-bopper SF characters. There was far too much popcorn for the duration of the blast.//

If you want kids, there's no time like the present. A couple of articles/programs recently have suggested that the government try to enact some program to allow smart women to have their children first and their careers later. It seems that having children between 18 and 26 (the college years, currently) are the best ones for having healthy children. But if you have children, how can you go to college? (Or vice versa.) And if you wait until after college, and setting up the career, first thing you know you're past the "good baby" window. Since you and I are already there... As I said in the message to Donna, we've thrown out the birth control.

Late Nights All Alone With A Test Tube, Oh, Oh-Oh, Oh: Not anymore, it doesn't sound like. Do you get the impression they're trying to get you to hurry up?//The canoe trip sounds like fun. It's not really canoeing if you don't dump at least once. Canoe dumping anecdote: Back in the 1600's when Father Marquette and Louis Joliet were traipsing around the midwest, Marquette was along to convert the

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natives and Joliet was really doing the exploring, making maps, etc. Marquette did a little bit, but not much, compared with Joliet. They spent about five years wandering around before heading back to the headquarters in Montreal. Everything went fine until the Niagara River, when Joliet's canoe dumped. Joliet's books were lost, but Marquette's weren't. Hence, Father Marquette is today a much more famous explorer since his books were copied and used to base maps, etc, and he has many cities, counties and a university named after him. Joliet's books got eaten by fish, presumably, and he got a city in Illinois named after him. Those 1600's maps of the midwest may have been much more accurate had Joliet's survived, and the reputation of America being filled with bloodthirsty savages never developed.//I suspect Guy put the liquid nitrogen in his Mountain Dew...//

I disagree with voting "Blood Music" first. The basic premise was covered in "Invasion of the Body Snatchers" decades ago. While "Ender's Game" had a fairly trite main theme (teenaged video-game whiz saves the Universe), the secondary plot of two juveniles getting on Congressional panels the way they did, and the thought given to how the characters would respond emotionally, convinced me this was the novel to vote for. (It didn't hurt that Orson Scott Card allowed me to corner him for about an hour total to talk about writing 'at Inconjunction--and paid for lunch--the week before ballots were due). "Cuckoo's Egg" shouldn't have been on the ballot, and neither should "Footfall" except for sheer volume. It took me two weeks to finish. (A long time when you consider I put down "Ender's Game" and "Blood Music" in eight hours.)//Oh, all right, you can come to Hamfest. Didn't I say that already? Bill singing solo just isn't the same.

Take Me Out To The Ball Game: I played softball in junior high, and then again when I worked for Ulrich's in Ann Arbor. I make a better score keeper than fielder.//In all 100 level courses, a certain number of the students think they're still in high school and are very surprised to learn they have to start thinking for themselves. I think your packaging major fits this category. Part of the reason I had so much trouble at Tech was that I hadn't learned that they actually expect you to do your homework in college.//

Letter From Easton: The term "planetary science course" makes me think of a bunch of chemists with little planet colored marbles in their test tubes. Frightening idea.//Otherwise, RAEBNC.

There is No Footnote 2: I think the most surprising fact inherent in your zine is that you have never learned to read German so you could read the German classics in their native language. Of course, when have you had time? But then, where do you get the time to do all you already do?// Where do you get hold of 18th-Century novels? I haven't seen any reprints of "MicroMegas" lately.//Why so many rabbits? Ask Barry, he's the biology major. No, seriously, there are a lot of nice rabbit-places, with farmland and gardens nearby, and few, if any natural enemies. The worst they have to fear is a kid with a BB gun or a big dog, of which there is thankfully a shortage of both.//

Re technology putting white-collar people out of work: Possibly. At the mortgage company where I work, they are finally using their computers for what they're good for. They now need more employees to input data, but fewer employees to analyze data. This means they need more people with quick fingers and fewer with quick brains. White collar men may be out of work, but they will need increasingly more women (greater manual dexterity)

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to deal with input. No one has yet figured out how to deal with the resultant sociological change of women workers being in demand and "no degree" male workers unemployable, which is the situation as far as Shawmut Mortgage is concerned. I know of only twelve men in the firm (of 100 employees)--three are loan officers, there's the controller, president, four vice-presidents, the branch supervisor, who all have accounting degrees (some are CPA's), plus four mailroom workers (all college students). Also, three of the four branches has a male loan officer. The rest are all women. See what I mean?//

Aw, c'mon, astrology is fun. So are Ouija boards. So is any esoteric/ hokey religion, as long as you don't give them money. Besides, any good Christian believes not only in astrology ("They saw his star in the East" [which means They were in the East when they saw his star, not that the star was in the eastern part of the sky, incidentally]), but in numerology, speaking in "tongues," and prophets. None of which is exactly accepted in our modern "Christian" society. I don't understand.//

I Lift My Lamp Beside The Golden Arches: I always knew I didn't want to move to California. But we have had two earthquakes in Ohio this year. Both were around Richter 4.0; I'd have to dig to find out the exact numbers. The first was in February and centered near Cleveland; the second was in June and centered near Lima. A lot of people in Dayton felt that one, as it happened about 2 in the afternoon. I missed it, but I didn't miss it, if you know what I mean. It startled the natives, who generally expect a tornado to be the worst thing to happen. But really, these quakes did minimal damage.//

It was an experience to read your article on the Shuttle/Centaur while listening to the news tell me of its cancellation. You really have to stop doing that! It's tempting to tell you not to write about the Shuttle in ApaTech, but that would be cutting off my only inside source of information, so I won't.//I hate sodium vapor lights. Hell is undoubtedly lit with sodium vapor lights.//

Transporter Topics: You tempt me to brag along with you, but I won't. At least not right now.

Mailing comments on Issue 43

Cover--We shoulda done it anyway.

555 Times/Roster: Don't send The Deadwood the next issue. See how fast they respond then. If they want a copy, they should find a friend who does contribute and copy it themselves (preferably in longhand). Actually, we should just limit the copy count to 30, and then send them to the people who contribute, in order of their zine's arrival at Headquarters. If there are surplus issues, send them to the people who contributed the issue before, and then the issue before that, until the supply is exhausted. If we get to the point that thirty three different people send in zines within two months, we'll expand the copy count.

Under the Bunya-Bunya Tree--Try to imagine GM trying to blend its style with that of EDS. That's a big reason my dad wasn't too sorry to take early retirement. He thinks GM made a big mistake, a global-scale mistake, in buying both EDS and Hughes, for that very reason.//It was nice seeing you again at WorldCon.

What I Did On My Vacation--Really!--I want a house. You probably already know this, but your zine isn't making it any easier.//Nice seeing you and Mary too.

Transporter Topics--My parents cat, Robin, is like that. He was neutered at six months; I don't think they even gave him a chance to spray first. As soon as the vet would, he was. He now weighs around fifteen pounds. Scott claims he walks on his knuckles. He definitely rules the neighborhood.

He's now around seven years old, but when he was two or three, my parents really thought they'd find little pieces of him scattered around the yard some morning, as he pursued lady friends despite his physical lacks. One night he literally staggered home and was rushed to the hospital for stitches between his ears. Mom thinks if the backdoor had been ten or twelve feet further, he never would have made it. As it was, the dog, Guido, woke my parents up to "go out" when they found him.

Back to names: I named both animals, mostly by accident. The dog's name came about because we ran out of English names and I went to my Spanish book before we found a suitable one. My mom didn't realize Guido was a male name, and then didn't care. Robin is so named because he is an orange tabby who bears a striking resemblance to Nine Lives' Morris. At the time (1978), my sister and I each had a nominal interest in the BeeGees (me in their older stuff like "I started a joke" and she in Saturday Night Fever), which have among their members twins Robin and Maurice Gibb. Since our cat "could pass for Morris' twin brother..." it was irresistible. Mom thinks it was because of his color, but she's wrong. Lori and I still wince, but grin, when the subject comes up.

Surely You're Joking, Mr. Ruffa--RAEBNC, sorry.

Crumbcrunchers, Inc.--How old is Marlene (ie. when was she born)? I have been having a lot of conversations with my sister and sister-in-law lately about relative rates of development, and I suffer from a lack of data. My sister's baby, Vicky, seems quite large for her age (six months, eighteen pounds, twenty-seven inches) especially next to Sandi's daughter, Colleen (thirteen months, twenty pounds, twenty-eight inches). Colleen is already talking in three word groups. (I heard her in the background on the phone and thought it was her sister, Alyssa, who is thirty months old.) Sandi is worried that a) Alyssa is slow; and b) Colleen is overly bright. Lori wonders if she should plan on football gear for Vicky.

Tell me: Do I really want kids, and all these "problems"?

Given that your zine ran twelve pages, I feel less guilty about how long this may run. At this point I have six pages of mailing comments, and I know there are still two post-mailings that I have mis-placed. And then I'll start in on my zine! I expect that this zine will consist of whatever I have on September 26, coherent or not.

I love quilts; wish I had time and inclination to make one myself.

Pontificating: A problem with space exploration is Who Gets To Control It. Right now the Pentagon and the Government get to, and neither one of

those groups gives up Power without a real fight. Certainly not to Private Enterprise. Actually, they would probably be willing to give it to ONE private firm, whose board of control would "coincidentally" have several former military men and senators. But the idea of MANY companies, maybe even headed by Entrepreneurs (notoriously unpredictable and, worse, uncontrollable), is absolutely abhorrent to them.

Consider that the idea of a Civilian (i.e. someone who has never been in the military) in space is considered a bad idea. Why? I think it may be because they can't be controlled, and aren't a member of the club. A Civilian could come down and say anything at all, and they couldn't even court martial the guy. A girl civilian would be better, according to them, because women can't spill the beans, and wouldn't really be being admitted to The Club anyway.

To date the only "civilian" to go on the Shuttle was Senator Jake Garn. Was he ever in the military? He may qualify on two counts. Reagan had to shove the Teacher-in-Space idea down NASA's throat. I don't think they resist commercialization for its own sake as much as for the fact it would reduce their power. And they can't stand to give up "ground" they already own.

All We Are Saying is "Give Peach a Chance!"--I'm tempted to say 'RAEBNC' just in response to that title. Ugh!//It was nice seeing you again. I hope we don't have to wait until we go to another WorldCon to see you again, as that will be two years, assuming we go to NolaCon. Somehow, I trust the weather in New Orleans even more than the weather in Atlanta. (I had brought both short sleeves and long sleeves with sweaters to Atlanta. Everyone laughed when I packed, but who wasn't caught scrambling for warmer clothing?) We'll probably go to the other extreme in New Orleans.

Between my joints, inner ear and my sinuses, I always know the forecast, and whether it really will rain or not. And I'm a lot younger than you. (rub, rub) Okay, so not THAT much.

Re visits from alien life forms: Try reading the book of Ezekiel (part of the Bible) as a science fiction story written by an ancient. It works rather well. Also, in Genesis 6:4, it says (Revised Standard Version), "The Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men, and they bore children to them. These were the mighty men that were of old, the men of renown." What are Nephilim? Why does it refer to them being "on the earth"? (From Moses' eyes, where else could they be?) What is the difference between a "son of God" and a "daughter of Man"? No biblical expert I have talked to has ever answered these questions.

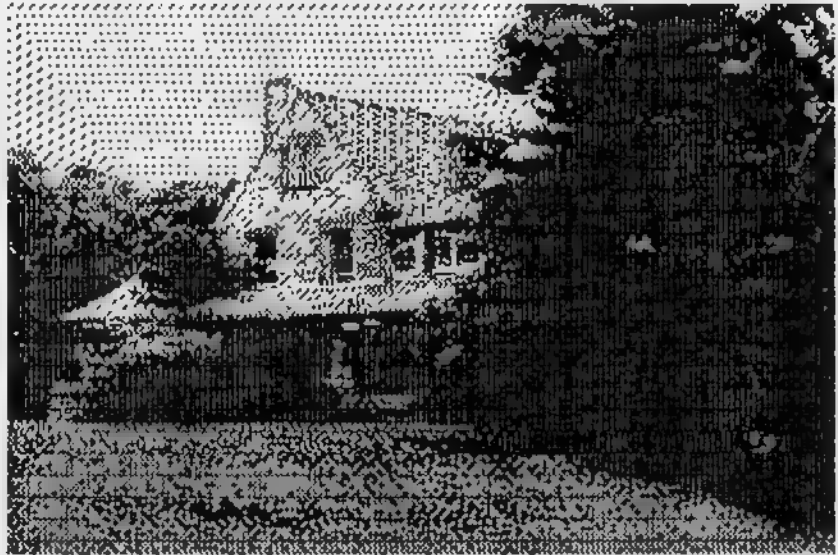
Enough already!

Roxanne

Letter from Easton

Guy Consolmagno, 200 High St, Easton Pa 18042

On the left, you see a picture of the mansion I'm living in nowadays. How many of my classmates decided to become Yuppies, gave up their ideals to work for Big Business, and can say they live in a house like this? My don't we feel smug and superior! Of course, wherever they live, they may very well own whereas I'll never own this house; but who needs to own? Use is everything, ownership is nothing. There's an old story that goes, a tour group of workers from some "People's Paradise" in eastern



Europe were touring the US back in the 50's... They saw all the cars in the parking lots and were amazed. "Don't be fooled, comrades," said their leader. Even though you think every American owns a car, it's really not so. It's actually the capitalist banks who own those cars!"

Life in Easton...where do I start? The best thing would be to give line-by-line mailing comments, but being sloppy I managed to leave my last two copies of the APA back at home, and I really want to get this thing out today and not go back home. So for all the people who think I don't read your apas, don't be offended. Most of you I don't even remember by name (shame on me!) but I do remember reading and enjoying reading about...small children; Fan Guests of Honor; publishing by computer; writing and preaching the idea of Technology as Fun (as opposed to Technology as monster or, the other side of that counterfeit coin, Technology as Messiah.)

Comments on the above? Well, I am extremely envious of people with kids. That's an obvious sign I don't have any, right? Quite true. Back in 1970, when I made the choice between going to MIT or becoming a Jesuit, I resigned myself to a life of celibacy no matter which way I chose, and

even though the times have changed (MIT is 25% women now, not 9% like it was when I was there) I haven't changed.

I enjoyed Zonker Harris' line in a recent *Doonesbury*, "in the war between the sexes I'm a conscientious objector."

This is somewhat related to my feelings reading the book - whose - name - I - don't - remember reviewed in *Pyro* a while ago, about *A Boy and His Unicorn*...and the issue of modern male views on sexuality. It is a truism, of course, that 20th century ideas of sexuality are pretty fucked up. The pun is intended. Why else would we use words for sexual intercourse to describe people with serious mental or emotional problems, or situations which are very badly confused?

But getting back to that book, it was pretty depressing to see the author viewing sexual intimacy as some sort of contest, a rite of manhood. Like a Maasai youth who is sent out into the bush and can't come home until he's killed a lion or a warrior from another tribe, the implication seems to be that you're not a Real Man until you've at least bought yourself a prostitute. The fact that the hero could intensely love another person didn't matter, it was what he did with his penis that counted. It's a pretty sad attitude.

Well, if sex-as-a-contest is rotten, one irony of modern sexual views is that they try to suppress one of the greatest things about sex, namely that it is the source of children. And kids are just plain neat. Being one myself...no, I'm not one. I shouldn't compliment myself so. When I was a kid I knew that us kids were darned different from adults, and since back then I knew everything and was always right, there's no reason to doubt that I'm not a kid anymore. My failing omniscience is a prime sign of that.

Other signs that I am no longer a kid...I somehow don't enjoy reading the same 10 page Sesame Street book over and over and over and over again. I don't throw my food on the floor. I don't write on the walls with crayons. I don't look around to see if anyone is watching before deciding whether or not to cry and throw a temper tantrum (nobody ever watches anymore—it's hardly worth the effort!).

I also can't just smile and gurgle to make everyone around me forget what a horrible screw-up I've just done.

I have spent a few weekends recently with kids-of-friends. Last weekend, an old roommate and his family came to visit; their daughter is 4 years old, and has a devastating imagination. Poor kid...her parents are both engineers, both had higher test scores than I did!

Most of my kid-watching has been with Dan and Leonie Davis' kids; their three year old, Sarah, is clearly the princess of the universe (at least she seems to think so) while the one year old, Benjamin (you're hearing a proud Godparent bragging here) has the sort of personality that radiates warmth, trust, and love. (Even though the rotten kidid beat me over the head with a wooden mallet while I was trying to watch a movie on TV...)

Book News: Moving from everybody's favorite topic, sex, to MY favorite topic, myself...

The following is the introduction to a book I'm working on...

Preface

(a word of introduction from one of the authors)

A while back I spent a couple of years teaching physics in Africa, as a volunteer with the US Peace Corps.

At one point during my service I had to return to the US for a month, and while I was home I visited with my friend Dan Davis, who was living at the time near New York City.

We got to talking about the beautiful dark skies in Africa, and the boundless ouriosity of my students about things astronomical. So that afternoon we went into Manhattan and, with his expert advice, I bought a little telescope to take back to Kenya.

Dan's been an avid amateur astronomer since he was a little kid, something of an achievement when you're growing up in the grimier parts of Yonkers and your eyesight is so bad you can start fires with your glasses. And at first, he was far more excited about my purchase than I was.

You see, when I was a kid I'd had a little telescope, too, a little 2-inch refractor that I bought with trading stamps. I remembered that looking at the Moon had been fun, and I knew how to find Jupiter and Saturn...but after that, I sort of ran out of things to look at. Those glorious color pictures of nebulae that you see in the glossy magazines are all take with huge telescopes, after all...even as a kid I knew my telescope couldn't show me anything like that, even if I knew where to look. But of course I didn't know; so the telescope gathered dust, and eventually got passed on to nephews and never seen again.

Well, now here was Dan getting all excited about my new telescope, and the thought that I'd be taking it back to Africa, land of dark skies and southern stars he had never been able to see. He gave me his star atlas, and a pile of books listing double stars and clusters and galaxies. Could it be that I could really see some of these things with my little telescope?

Well, the books were a big disappointment. At first, I couldn't make heads or tails of them. And even

when I did figure them out, they all seemed to assume that I had a telescope with at least a 6" mirror or lens. There was no way of telling which of the zillion objects they listed might be able to be seen with my little 3-incher.

Finally, Dan went out with me one night. "Look," he said, "let's look at Albireo."

I'd never heard of Albireo.

"It's just over here," he said. "Point it this way, zip, and there you are."

"Neat!" I said. "A double star! You can actually see both of them!"

"Yeah, and look at the colors," he said.

"Wow...one of them's red, and the other's blue. What a contrast."

"Isn't that great?" he said. "Now let's go on to the double-double."

And so it went for the next hour.

Eventually it occurred to me that all of the books in the world weren't as good as having a friend next to you to point out what to look for, and how to find it. Unfortunately, I couldn't take Dan back to Africa with me.

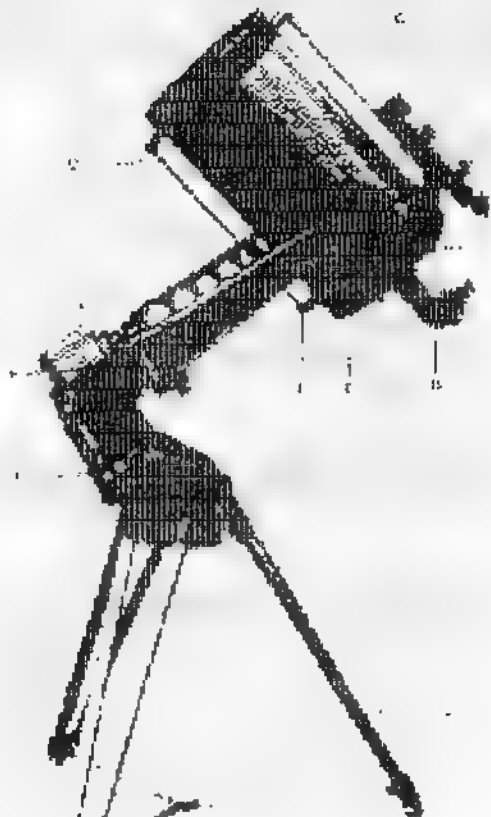
I suspect the problem is not that unusual. Every year, thousands of telescopes are sold, used once or twice to look at the Moon, and then they wind up gathering dust in the attic. It's not that people aren't interested--but on any given night there may be 2,000 stars visible, and 1,975 of them are pretty boring to look at in a telescope. You have to know where to look for the other 25 interesting objects. But the standard observer's guides are just incomprehensible. Why should you have to fight with Right Ascension and Declination when all you want to do is point the telescope "up" some night and be able to say, "Hey, would you look at this!"

It's for these people, the casual observers who'd like to have fun with their telescopes without committing

themselves to hours of technical details, that we've decided to write **Turn Left at Orion**.

Well, we (Dan and I) sent out a bunch of sample chapters, and Cambridge University Press has "bit". They've agreed to pay real live money for our manuscript (assuming we can finish it in time and get it to them by next October). It's a good thing both Dan and I have Mac computers, so we can pass sections back and forth for proofreading. As you should be able to gather from the intro, the book is meant to be used by rank amateurs who don't have the faintest idea how to find M-13, and who probably bought a telescope for Halley and got very disappointed and turned off astronomy as a result. My inspiration for the book in many ways is H. A. Rey's book, **The Stars**, which I first read when I was in the 5th grade and which I have used ever since.

Telescopes: Speaking of things astronomical, the weather here in Easton has been cloudy, wet, rainy, and muggy for 7 days now, with forecasts for more of the same. The reason behind all this bad weather



is that our C-14 telescope arrived last week! It looks like a wonderful instrument. So far we have seen brick walls and trees out our window...

The Professorial Life All sorts of little goodies here...

The Physics Club showed **Real Genius** at their first meeting this year. Boy did it make me homesick for MIT! It could have been straight out of Senior House, I swear I recognized all those people. The relationship between the students and the advisor was absolutely the way it feels when you're a graduate student, including "why - weren't - you - in - here - working - on - Sunday - morning" and the totally arbitrary power they seem to have over you (but from the other side of the fence, now, it all looks so different! Glad I don't have to deal with grad students any more...) The weird 19-yr-old female student is no exaggeration; indeed, anyone who ever met Margaret Minsky would not be phased by anyone in the movie. (Margaret used to sleep on her floor because she used her bed to hold her books...she kept a pet boa constrictor in her room...but then, she often did things just to try to out-bizarre everyone else, I suspect, so maybe that doesn't count. Only those who were truly weird without realizing it should be held up for comparison. And the scene in the bathroom—which I am sure most moviegoers took to be an exaggeration—is the sort of thing that happens to first-year frosh all the time in the unisex johns in East Campus and Senior House. (Greg Ruffa and I actually

lived in Bexley, which was a much more sedate place. Why, nothing strange ever happened there, did it, Greg?)

The McKelvy Series on Love and Death is going great guns...this is the weekly seminar series that McKelvy House (the honors-residence that I'm housepapa for) puts on every Sunday. Mostly people have been showing films on video as the starting point for our discussions. Talking about love and death viewed in pop music, one student wants to show a video of Woodstock. She was not quite 2 years old when Woodstock happened.

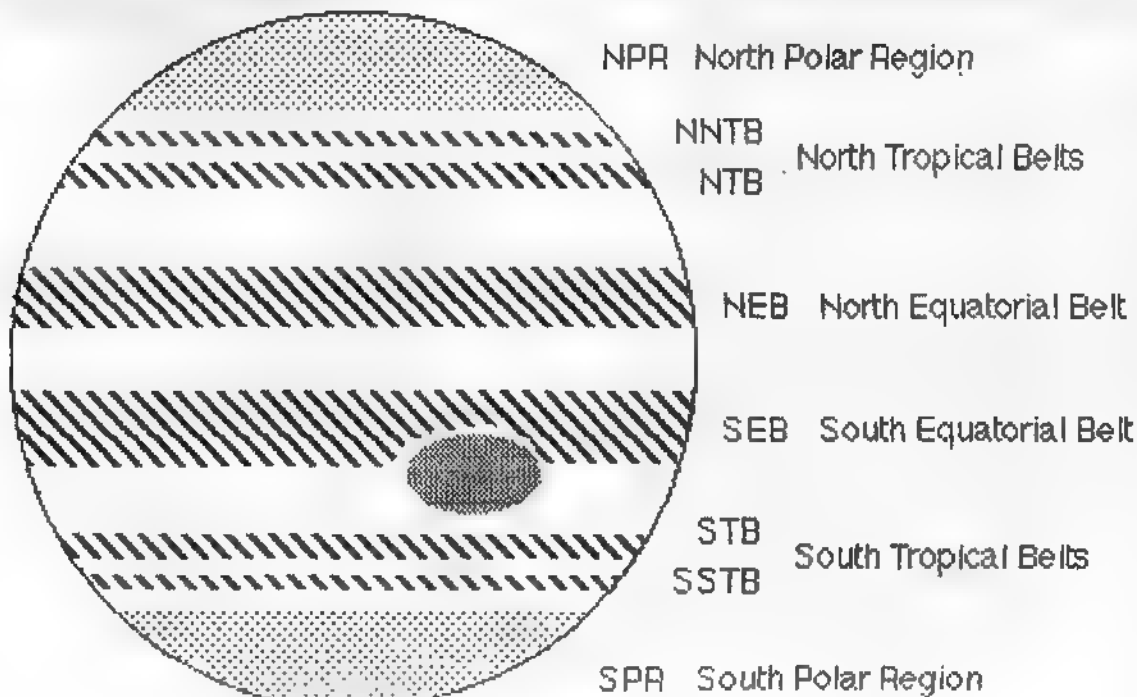
In freshman physics, a couple of us (the course is taught in 4 sections) assigned the following problem, out of the textbook by Hans Ohanian; give it a whirl: *In a closed subway car, a girl holds a helium-filled balloon by a string. While the car is traveling at constant velocity, the string of the balloon is exactly vertical.*

a. While the subway car is braking, will the string be inclined forward or backward relative to the car?

b. Suppose that the string is inclined at an angle of 20° with the vertical and remains there. What is the acceleration of the car?

If you think the problem is trivial, you're probably wrong; if you think, "aha, I get the trick," then you're right. The tough part which caused great discussion among us professors was how to go about explaining why the balloon goes backwards. The most elegant way is to invoke general relativity!

Ch. 15 Jupiter



"I GOT THEM DE-LUX GEN'RAL FADED EASTMANCOLOR BLUES"

brought to you this month in Semi-Exciting
DOLBY STEREO

Steve Salaba
610 Luella Court
Kalamazoo, MI 49001

Hello again! The title of this apa is "a film collector's lament". If you really want me to, I'll expalain it some time.

The first APA was hard to write, but this second one is harder! Here goes...

We just found out that the printing company I work for has been bought out by a printing conglomerate. The word they used was 'merger' but we all know the truth. They also say that there will be absolutely no changes in personnel or policy, but then thay always say that, don't they? We shall see... This company is supposed to buy only state-of-the-art equipment, and two new presses costing \$750,000 each are due in within a year. I'm optimistic, but guardedly so. Oh well, at least the stockholders are happy.

My interest in things antique (records, movies) has expanded since I returned from the classic car show in Auburn, Indiana. Marty Franz and I mosied down there and saw some mighty interesting (and expensive!) cars. Auburn, you may not know, is the home of the Auburn-Cord-Duesenberg Museum. The old Auburn showroom (being restored to its former Art Deco glory) houses the museum. [I may have to try putting some pictures in this Apa!] I didn't get to see the museum the first time out as the car show and auction took up one whole day (actually, four days, but I was only there for one). Among the cars being auctioned off were about 30 of the Rolls-Royces formerly owned by the Baghwan Shree Rajneesh. Imagine, if you can, a 1985 Rolls-Royce with a purple metal-flake paint job. All it needed was a pair of fuzzy dice and a little yellow sign in the back saying 'Baghwan on Board'. Also there was the Peter Max-style psycheldelicly-painted 1956 Bentley formerly owned by John Lennon. It was sitting on a roped-off section of lawn next to a huge speaker plugged into the tape deck playing Beatles' songs (what else?).

[Funny, whenever I see the word 'Bentley', I don't think of a car. I think of a person. It's been too many years since I saw John Steed, I guess]

Anyhow, I've since had a chance to see the museum, and though it isn't as impressive as the auction, I still think it's worth the trip (and the \$4.00 admission; \$2.50 for students).

MAILING COMMENTS!!!

(These will be more or less at random unless I do a lot of cut&paste on this here word processor)

Oh, Susannah...(Not the song, but the one from CRUMBCRUNCHERS)... Speaking of Space Camp...did you see the movie? You didn't say. It makes me wish I was a kid, too. Also I seem to share your fascination with old houses. Which reminds me of the movie 'The Money Pit'. As a homeowner, I feel the continuing pressure of: leaky roof (replaced last month), plaster falling from wet hole in ceiling (to be fixed this week) and stuff like that. Re:Fats Waller- I'm not sure, but I think there are 3 or 4 two-record sets in the 'Complete Fats Waller' series. I may be removing my least-liked Waller 78's from my collection someday soon. Would you like a list? I have maybe 300 78's altogether (20 or so are Wallers) but it looks like nothing next to the collection of a friend of mine who has over 10,000! When buying from a collector, one can pay premium prices (\$4.00 to \$40.00 to \$100.00) but luckily I've never had to do that. Alas, most of the mint condition hot jazz 78's get sent to overseas collectors who are willing to pay \$200 or more! I, also, liked 'Great Mouse Detective'. And 'Flight of the Navigator'.

DAVE: Enjoyed your comments on solar power. Was it in an earlier apa that I saw a discussion on whether the age of the backyard inventor was over? Are we really going to have to deal with expensive funding, legislative interference, and creativity by committee to get anything done? I have the fear that a solution will be found for a particular problem but no one will be listening. [On the other hand, this feeling could be due to the fact that I recently watched a tape of 'Brazil'.]

LINDA: So many people have expressed interest in a continuation of your 'zine that you probably don't need any encouragement from me...however, I would like to hear about Japan...!

DONNA: It may be very difficult to find an interesting name that doesn't have any unwanted associations. For instance, 'Emilio': Fans may think of 'Lizardo' and others may think of 'Estevez'. However I do think that 'Emilio Proni' has a nice ring to it...It gets my vote.

GENERAL COMMENT: It seems that everyone has been mentioning the joys/woes of their particular word processing equipment, so I thought I'd tell you how I'm struggling along with a plain ol' Commodore 64. This w/p program is called Fontmaster II and I bought it, of course, because of the **Fancy stuff you can do with** it. It comes with 30 fonts but most of them are variations on 'typewriter' type. Alas, no spelling checker, though I understand that most of us in this Apa would prefer a 'fannish' spelling checker anyway.

ROXANNE: If it gets any longer, your zine may be up for the novel of the year award. This is not criticism, it just *reads* like a novel. An *interesting* novel. Were you 'forced' to keep a journal for a class? Most of us went through that, I'm sure (and enjoyed it). Ref. Greg's anecdote in ApaTech #43 re: reading textbooks for 'fun'. [Why not? In sixth grade I checked a book out of the school library- Scientific American's Book of Mathematical Puzzles & Paradoxes- and when I checked it out again a year later, mine was still the only name on the card!] Anyhow, keep writing.

VALLI: Ref yr cmt to Marty re: video watching. Yes, I also find it hard to stop watching a movie in the middle. But only when it is on the TV screen. Tube-watching habits are soooo hard to break! Alas, some of the thrill of being a film collector has worn off. Thanx to videotape, everybody is doing it! Oh well, the more, the merrier.

BARRY: Always enjoy reading your zine. It seems a bit odd to me that two important points about my 'Bear & Billy' cover were explained in subsequent issues. One point by Bill and the other by you. Is this just a coincidence or are you two telepathically linked?

BONNIE: Ref yr cmt re: boring teachers: I had a high school history teacher who spent many a class period telling us about his WW II experiences. Unfortunately, he never had any really *interesting* ones. If he could have made his talks more interesting, I might have done better in History. Reminds me of a movie (doesn't everything?) called *Teachers*. The substitute history teacher dressed in costume and, with his students, acted out scenes from American history. The students did very well until the authorities discovered that this teacher was really an escaped mental patient, and they sent him back. Ref the 'radar-in-your-car': James Bond had it in 1964. ('Goldfinger')

BILL: Always enjoy your zine, too. "Doesn't just taste good, it's good for you too!" Also, see my cmt to BARRY, above re: the 'Bear & Billy Show' cover.

GENERAL COMMENT: So many of you liked 'Real Genius' that I thought I'd mention that it *will* be in the Ishercon video program, along with other stuff, like 'Brazil'. (Assuming that those with access to VCRs haven't O.D.'d on it yet.

Whew! I had more to say than I thought when I sat down here at the old keyboard. I may not be in every issue, but I'll try to keep it regular enough so my mailing comments won't be too far out of date. Will probably see some of you at Windycon, if I don't end up working a lot of weekends because of the merger. See ya!

Steve

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TOPICS

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Number 39

DeepSouthCon

This convention was held in Louisville, KY, this year, in the Gault House, the home of Rivercon for several years. However, after DeepSouthCon it may not be again. The pool was closed, not unexpected this late in the season but aggravating. The hotel restaurant seemed to have problems providing clean, unbroken glasses, at least for the breakfast buffet. The convention was contracted to have access to two rooms starting on Thursday at noon, so that they could begin setting up for the art show. They got them early Friday, despite protests. It seems that the UAW convention already there got to keep the services of the rooms even in the face of a signed agreement. The gaming room was beautiful; a large banquet room on the second floor with plenty of room for several games at once. Gaming started Friday evening and proceeded until early the next morning. When the players returned a few hours later they found that their tables and schedual sheets had **been removed and hotel people were setting up for a UAW banquet**. This was particularly irritating to me because I had schedualed a Fringeworthy adventure for ten. Because of the confusion of where we would be playing we didn't get started until half an hour late, and some of the players never showed. One guy got there about half an hour after we finally started, angry that he had only just then found us. To add insult to injury, the convention people, who were supposed to have the room at twelve, came in at 11:50 and told us to move again. I explained that we were almost finished, but the woman said that they needed the room right away. We moved, took a break, then finished in about fifteen minutes. When I checked afterwards, the room we had been using previously was still empty.

However, despite these troubles, I had a good time. I got to run a game, talk about gaming, comics, science and SF, as well as less fanish interests. The costume contest had some good performances. I actually had more fun than on any three days of the worldcon.

ConFederation

Speaking of the worldcon, it just didn't seem like a world science fiction convention to me. Instead, it was more like a big regional. I loved the main hotel, which must have been designed by Gieger (who did much of the set work on Alien). Particularly impressive was the interior, which was most of the hotel! There were workers hanging from ropes working on something or other, sliding down using brakes on the seats to control their drop. There may not have been any radio-controlled blimps flown, but paper airplanes made spectacular maneuvers in the currents. The Huckster's room was too small and awkwardly arranged. The art show was huge! I saw a few movies but they didn't have anything I was particularly interested in. I did see some impressive new Japanese animation in a private room.

Oh, yeah; we were supposed to fly to Atlanta. We didn't. The weather reports were too bad. Our pilot kept looking out the window

car

as we drove down, cussing out the weather bureau, because he didn't see anything he would have had trouble with. On the other hand, there was solid, low overcast the entire trip back.

Novel Matters

I have not done much actual writing on my book lately but I have done some background research and organizing. My timeline is much tighter now.

Getting High

The company trying to market space burials is in trouble. The Florida State Comptroller has charged them with violating a law requiring a cemetery to have at least 15 acres of land, accessible by paved road. The fact the no will actually be interred on earth doesn't enter into it.

Mailing Comments

Dave Levine: I had heard about the Bunya-Bunya trees on All Things Considered but didn't connect that with your title until you explained it. These things would make a good gift for a long-term revenge. Sounds like you've been busy.

Rolf: I have often looked forward to having several days off for a holiday, planning to get a lot of things done that I usually don't have time for. Somehow, they still don't get done. Look at it this way; making it all poured concrete saved you the trouble of having to lay the blocks. You got the job done more quickly and wound up with a better support for only a fraction more cost. Sounds good to me. I know what you mean about needing central air conditioning, having only a small window unit for my entire house. My "Marching Morons" piece was written in very compressed form, which has resulted in several people thinking I was implying racism in the original stories. I was trying to cover too much ground in a small article and caused confusion due to a lack of separation of subjects. Actually, many Eugenecists did claim that the poor were a separate race from the rich, the proof being that they were poor! Samuel Clemmings wrote a story about a heaven where people earn their entrance on the merit of what they might have been if not for unfavorable circumstances. For instance, there was a Chinese (I think) peasant who had the talent to be the greatest general the world had ever seen but who instead died in poverty trying to feed his family.

Barry: I got Pyro and will try to write something for the next issue, even if it is only a letter.

Crumbcrunchers: I used to do volunteer work for the University of Kentucky's anthropology museum and learned a few things about making exhibits. Fascinating work, but hard. I am still intending to write something for STARWIND but obligations are piling up here. The local fanzine editor wants more "Joy" articles, for instance. How can I get a sample issue? From what I have heard, adults can get into Space Camp. A friend of mine was talking about this, saying that he wished he had the money. Good luck on your new living quarters.

Dave: If you can't afford a laser printer, how about a bubble jet? I looked at one of these when buying my Amiga and they are very good, ^{with} letter quality print ^{and} quiet and fast. You have my sympathies about PE exams. It took me two tries. I missed it the first time by one point. If we do have orbital power satellites, very little of the energy will be beamed to earth. Most of it will be used to run factories in orbit, replacing those on the ground. This is more efficient and less polluting.

Greg: For a short story I created a space drive which had been

developed (early in the next century) by a couple of grad students from declassified particle beam work. Given a good power source, such as a portable fusion reactor (also recently developed), it allowed the construction of a spacecraft which could accelerate at about 1/10th g continuously. The reaction mass was rock flour. If only it were so simple. My point about improving the Shuttle's electronics was that it would make them more reliable. No more last-minute aborts because the computers aren't talking to each other. There is talk about re-opening the Saturn V engine production line. Howcum their tooling is still intact when that used for the YF-12 was destroyed in 1970? I hope to have a detailed discussion on SDI here, either this time or next.

MTV

I am sitting here, listening to/watching MTV as this is being written. One thing which has struck me is that most of the remakes of old favorites miss the point. The new "Runaways" is fantastic, with good music and great stop-motion animation. However, the video has nothing to do with runaways. The new "250624" has nothing in common with the original, in either music or story, except the lyrics and notes. For those among you who are too young to remember, the original was about taking drugs, using California drug use slang. The remake is about rebelling against a futuristic dictatorship.

Weigh in Motion

The section for which I work is currently testing a weigh-in-motion system for weighing and classifying vehicles. It has **two inductance** loops to mark the beginning and end of a vehicle, with a capacitance pad between to weigh each axle. The rig measures the speed of the vehicle, the weight of each axle, the spacing of each axle and the time of encounter. It will then calculate the total weight. All of the components are portable, which makes fastening them in place a bit of a chore. The small counter (called a Weighman) can store several thousand vehicles and operate for ten days on a charge. The unit used to bring the data back to the office for processing (the Retriever) can store a full load from two units and can run for a hundred days between charges. The system is complicated and so far we have been unsuccessful in calibrating the weights.

Did you know that duct tape is the Force? It's light on one side, dark on the other and it holds the galaxy together.

Rod

I received your letter of the 12th inst. and was glad to hear from you. I am well and hope this finds you the same. I have been thinking of you very much lately and wondering how you are getting on. I hope you are well and happy. I have been thinking of you very much lately and wondering how you are getting on. I hope you are well and happy.

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Yours truly,
John Doe